



By Abdullah Awal

STORIES OF EASTERN HEARTBREAK

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The Immortality of Love

I was a young man of 19 years of age, but my wealth and riches were endless. I strutted proudly beneath the solemn skies, unvexed by the cares of the world, for I was naturally gifted with fine features, and a tall and strong body. People often gazed with awe and occasionally, envy, at my enviably perfect form. Young women swooned at me in fits of passion, and elderly couples sought my hand for their eligible daughters. I greatly enjoyed sampling the luxuries of life, especially tasting fine wine, and would devour huge quantities of intoxicants each day.

My name was often uttered with pride by my peers, who saw it befitting a man of my wealth and stature.

They called me Malik bin Dinar.

My life was a happy one, yet I was often terribly lonely and sad. I knew my years of indulgence was hurtling me down the stream of dissipation. I continued to usurp wine in excess and used my wealth to satisfy my vanity and gales of passion.

My well-built body was formed like an athlete, and none could equal me in prowess and vigor. I was a skilled sportsperson, and charming and pleasant demeanor came naturally to me. My attractive face and handsome body were prized possession desired and admired by all. The world was very kind to one who was endowed with wealth, strength and beauty like me!

I occasionally went backward and forward in my memory searching for a meaning in my existence, but there was none to be found. I was an uncommonly handsome rich man, and though I had a plethora of admirers, there was no place for me to seek internal solace. No member of my gleeful audience could proffer me honest advice when I asked counsel from them on manifold matters. But I was wealthy and so I dressed in tastefully embroidered tunics and blazing bright overcoats, which accentuated my graceful limbs and everyone in the city admired my proud and beautiful face. Drinking wine was one of the preoccupations I had become entirely engrossed in. I had not found any lasting happiness in wealth and honor and sought happiness from my drinks. With my endless money, I purchased the most ages and expensive alcoholics wine, and I allowed myself to become consumed by the intoxicants.

I was not merely rich and handsome, but I had an obsession with my attires and followed the very latest fashion and was seen as a fashion icon for all. So I dressed very well, as each pair of my clothes were worth more than an average man's yearly income. I had immeasurable money and I used it to beautify myself in the finest collection of designer clothes.

Although rich and famous my heart was bereft of joy and I sometimes searched for a happiness that would calm my restless heart.

I felt no one I knew would have pity on me had they known my inner sadness and depression which I sometimes felt coming towards me at full speed.

Was it the evil sorrows of my innermost heart that did not allow me to hide my unhappiness? No obvious difficulties ailed me but, in my prosperity, I feared for future adversity, and who was strong enough to bear the burden of the adversities of the world? I possessed all the prosperities of the world, but it was the lack of a divine love that left me longing for more prosperity.

I had tremendous amount of wealth and it enabled me to act in any way I desired and also avoid penalties. My riches ensured I could do anything and get away with it, and so I used my wealth and power and did what I felt like doing.

Beautiful and wealthy women offered themselves for marriage at all times, and I finally accepted the marriage proposal from a pretty heiress who had come from a prominent family.

I was wedded to her in the most grandeur festival, but the pomp and show of the marriage celebrations did not give me any great pleasure.

I had just married because it was required of me but I felt no peace in my heart.

I was lonely in a world which was cruelly mocking to me.

O the beauty of youthful years and happy days, yet ever dull and always the same! Within my wealth, I searched for joy; within beauty, I sought contentment and finding neither, I went plunging amid the path of intoxicants, and in wine I gained the reprieve I was looking for. I tasted, and hungered and thirsted after alcohol, and eventually, began to feel unhappy in this state. I had want for nothing in my life, and never faced any serious sorrow or harsh labor, but even then I believed I was a burden to myself. My life was specked with lamentable joys and I fought against joyous sorrows: In derisive contempt, the riches of this life continued to flaunt itself to me, and my heart rebelled against itself, and I suddenly understood that I had no reason to be good.

I had never experienced the affection and love I sought.

My childhood was turbulent one, and adolescence was devoid of sincere friends and honest peers. I found it sensible to take refuge in human indulgence, by following my desires and indulging in every sinful act that I came across.

My heart was desolate. I searched for contentment in wealth and power, but I found only manifold distress in pursuit of joy, and at times, my life felt so utterly meaningless that I indulged in every sinful act to find happiness or discover a hidden purpose to this useless act in a play that man called life. Such wealth I had that I was often bias to my own conduct.

My pursuit of all the wealth in the world made me oblivious to God and Faith, and with a volatility of disposition, I continued to indulge in excessive drinking and partying with my aristocratic peers.

I drank wine and indulged in so much joy and desires, that I feared I would soon fall to the most abject stage of degradation.

One day, the gale was blowing and it was raining hard; and the clouds on the evening sky appeared dull and stormy. In that gloomy atmosphere, I sighed and contemplated on my life.

I had reached the age of twenty there was nothing that had classified as sin that I did not commit. Everything one could imagine; I had done that act. I

heartily engaged in sinful behavior, excessive drinking and often ended up hurting others. There was not a sin mankind could conjure up which I did not act out.

But as days went by, my heart became more restless and more broken and I loathed myself with every passing hour. I was dismal because there was no direction to my life.

I survived each day, flaunting wealth and my physical beauty and prowess, and I sinned willfully, because inwardly, I searched for love or some meaning in life or a reason for this futile endurance but neither could I find any happiness nor any contentment nor any meaning to my useless life!

One morning, when I could not sleep at night because of the restlessness of my heart, and the guilt of my past sinful life, I left my bed and roamed aimlessly about the street till dawn. It was around this time, one day that I was walking, that I saw a young man almost my age walking with his daughter: a lovely girl of around five years of age. The child was so beautiful and so angelic that I was in awe. The little girl cheered with such a musical laughter and had such love for her father that something happened to my heart as I watched them from a distance. In my heart, I prayed silently to my God Who Created me: And increase, my Lord, Your gifts and kindness towards me, and save me from human weakness and concupiscence. I seek from You with prudence wherein I am still a sinner and imperfect human, but I hope for Your Mercy, so grant me a perfect child! The little girl had taken over all my thoughts: I prayed and I wished she were my daughter! Alas! At that very moment, I had such a fervent wish to have a daughter like her! The desire came upon my heart that I must have a child, and the daughter would solve all my life's ineptness.

When I got home that day, I forgot about this encounter, and went about my usual daily routine. That evening, my wife told me she was expecting a child!

However, I thought myself suddenly unworthy to become a father, so I cared little about the joyful news and spent more time away from home. I continued to remain engrossed in the pursuit of wine, and scarcely went to check on my spouse.

Such drinking took its toll on me and in my drunken stupor, I became miserable and wearisome; snapping at neighbors continually, and fighting passersby with my fist, often exhausting their limited patience. Some would try to excuse my behavior citing my obvious state of intoxication, while others would acquiesce to the plea of ill-health and avoid interacting with me to the best of their abilities.

Then one day, as I walked home with a heavy heart, I noticed that most houses in the area were dark, and all visible lights were already extinguished. A few countrymen pulled their wagons along, carrying their life's wealth on it. The shops were closed.

Life was coming to a standstill, and a few people scattered around the roads, salvaging their day's work. Some young workers carried fish baskets on their shoulders, hurrying to the warmth of their home. All was normal and peaceful. But my heart was anxious, and I hurried home. It was already nine months since my wife had given me the news that she carried my child!

I did not believe the joyful news! But the unmistakable cry of the newborn infant burst like happy music in my ears! My wife had given birth to the most beautiful baby girl. My new source of joy was the birth of this bubbly-eyed daughter. My infant child was charming baby; cheerful in manners, and from cradle years, possessed keen feelings, and a lively temper. I loved my daughter most tenderly.

However, with the birth of my child, I became enamored with love and affection for the small infant, and I wanted my only child to be proficient in many languages and be educated in the greatest schools of the world, but the dissolute course of my life made all my hopes go astray.

I remember when I held my baby in my arm for the first time, my heart soared to heaven and I burst into a passion of tears promising the God who blessed my unworthy soul with such a beautiful innocent baby, that I would try my best to avoid sinning and endeavor to the best of my ability to be a worthy father to her!

I was not religious man and had scarcely any knowledge of religion but I knew some beloved anecdotes from the life of Prophet Muhammad, and I knew that he had loved his daughter Fatimah more than any human on earth could love a child. My ancestors, who knew the Prophet in person, told me how Prophet Muhammad always greeted his daughter most warmly upon returning from a journey. She was the first person he met upon arriving, and Fatimah his most beloved daughter- was always the last person he would bid farewell when departing for a journey. He loved her most ardently and sought to remain in her company for the longest time.

From my forefathers, I had heard about how the Prophet adored his children, and particularly his daughter Fatimah, and I heard how the noble Prophet, despite being the king of Arabia, and Apostle of Peace for the universe, chose to live a life of austerity, and as such, he bequeathed all the wealth that was in his possession to the poor, the orphan, the wayfarer and the needy. He left nothing for himself. Whatever riches or luxurious items that were gifted to him by the rulers and emperors of faraway lands, Prophet Muhammad gave those away, and having no items of value, he and his family often spent weeks and months in utter poverty, and even till his last days on this planet, the Prophet's noble household did not possess even droplets of oil to light the lamp at night as he passed away to a better world.

His wife and children would nourish themselves with the scant food or fruits they could afford, but the Prophet of Mercy remained in poverty for days on end.

Weeks and months would pass without him partaking one morsel of food, and when the pain of hunger gnawing at his blessed stomach became unbearable,

the Prophet would have to tie stones on his stomach in order to appease the pain of starvation. Occasionally, if he did get one meal or receive an invitation to a dinner, then before tasting a single morsel himself, Prophet Muhammad would first wrap any delicacy or curry that was offered in a piece of bread, and dispatch it with his friends or request his host to send the meal to his daughter, Fatimah's house. Only after the messenger returned and confirmed that Fatimah had eaten would the Prophet finally agree to eat.

When I heard episodes from the Prophet's life and saw how earnestly he loved his daughter, I understood his feelings, as a new father of the most beautiful lovely angelic lovely girl, I appreciated his pain in seeing his daughter suffer from hunger.

Today, I understood the love he had for Fatimah. Today, I had become a father like him, and was the guardian of a beautiful daughter, and this was the first time in my life I understood what love meant.

Now that I understood how powerful was the love a father could feel for his daughter, immediately decided to name her after the prophet's daughter.

Thus, I named my infant Fatimah.

Days went by and every fiber of my heart grew fonder and fonder still of my only child.

Fatimah became the pride of my heart.

The extension of my bloodline.

The cause of my existence.

The blood of my veins.

The beating of my heart.

The soul of my body.

The reason for my living.

The cause for me changing my life style.

I desired to expend all my wealth in rearing this darling child, and I had spoiled her and taken care of her every wish and whim and strove to make her a real princess.

I deeply wished never to indulge in false behavior or sins thereafter.

Alas! I was but a man with fluctuating personality and had a flipping mood indeed, and time against time, I fell into a sort of depressed melancholy.

Sometimes, despite trying so hard to stay away from every sin, I could not help but take wine to elevate my passionate feeling and emotions.

Oh, the wine! What was this wine that caused men to sin and surrender to desire?

Yes! I knew wine was the cause of all sinning and it was considered the mother of all evils. It made your heart light and careless. Intoxicants made you weak and lame!

No doubt wine made men weak towards all feelings and forced people to give up all self-control. It made you forget all the goodness.

Indeed, wine made you forget the blessing of your Lord which you enjoyed day and night.

Intoxicant was a vile thing for it made you pity yourself and justify sinning, by making you forget that you did not deserve the blessing your Lord had bestowed on you.

I knew wine made people ungrateful in life, and forgetful and fearless in committing sins. Wine made one so fearless that you nearly forget that God could cause death and bring about destruction in one moment, and the end could come while you are in the act of sinning!

Yes, verily, wine was the mother of all sins.

It was the cause and the reason of all evil actions done by man, from the beginning of time!

And wine cause all the guilt of your heart to vanish away. So, you could have sinned and hurt others but never feel guilt afterwards for wine had numbed your senses and thus, turning honorable men into pitiless and guiltless beasts.

And, yet, knowing all this, I could never let go off wine.

The smell of it, the taste of it and the urgency to indulge in its sweet bitter enjoyment was irresistible!

Meanwhile, my darling daughter grew a little older, and became a fine toddler.

The tiny human being became the delight of my life, and she uttered lovely words and even began to learn to call me *Father*! What a joy it was to have a child of your own! Oh, what joy it was to be called father by such a lovely extension of yourself!

Oh who knew the happiness of a father and the pride they carry for their darling children.

From ages ago, I had a large collection of the most expensive wine in my cellar.

Occasionally, I would leisurely bring up a bottle and attempt to swirl the luxurious drink in my mouth, but whenever I tried to put the bottle to my lips, my daughter would knock it down and cause the contents to spill over the floor.

Alas! I was man of severe temperament and would it have been any one but her, I would have punished them severely, but I loved my child a million times more than I cherished the wine!

So, my days went on in this fashion.

Whenever I tried to drink wine, my little daughter would knock the bottle away from me, and I could not drink.

But I was not too upset over this, because she spent all her days on my lap learning new words and loved me like no one had ever loved me.

All day, I would wait to go home to hold the darling child in my arms and she would play with my long hair. My Fatima would sit for hours beside me, and we played childish games, until I forgot about all the unhappiness that vexes my life, and I lost count of the long hours which I spent in her dear company. All the heaviness in my heart would vanish the moment I entered the threshold of my house and hear her laughter ring out like the sweetest lute. The musical childish voice would echo in my heart, and make me forget all pain and fear this life had offered me.

The days turned into months and months into years. I was adoring every moment of my life with my child!

Everyday my love increased for her than the day before until I almost forget all the sadness of my life.

Once, when I was walking down the road with my daughter, crossing through the busy streets, my sight fell on the store window. The towering stained glass of which adorned the shop from the floor to the ceiling was brilliantly clean, and as the scorching sun blazed on, it made the glass reflect everyone pristinely clearly. The glass window resembled the most exquisite mirror, and as I stood in front of the glass with my daughter, my heart took a violent turn and I stood, shaken in wonderment!

Was it really me?

Was this darling child really my daughter?

Was this toddler who leapt lovingly on my shoulders and held on to my hand really my own flesh and blood?

I was stunned to think that several years ago, before my child was born, I had witnessed an identical phenomenon, where a father was walking with his lovely five-year-old daughter, and he too was walking along these very paths, and as I stood then, watching them in awe, I made a silent wish to Allah to grant me a child of my own, who would be as fine and lovely as the girl in the road. And to my utter shock and amazement, my Creator the God of Abraham the Maker of Adam had answered my unspoken wish and accepted my prayer. But as fate had written very Soon afterwards, I was struck with the arrow of sorrow!

How could I know what was in store for me?

How could I have a clue of the agonizing torment that was to befall on me?

Oh if I had known! If only I had known!

How differently would I had lived then!

If only I had a clue what a changed life would I have led!

Not long after that day, I faced the worst fear any parent might face in their lifetime!

Upon returning home that day, my beloved daughter fell ill, and her health worsened day by day.

I was not special and I had no unnatural powers. My child had fallen ill and what power had I do to change fate?

Oh, how could anyone understand the fear than encroached my heart as I stood in shock by her bedside, and watched the little heart of my baby rise and fall with pained breathing? I prayed in desperation and sat next to her bed day and night proffering questions to her to gain insight about her pain.

No doctor had I spared, no medicine had I kept aside, and no path did I leave untrodden in trying to cure my only child!

My little girl became weaker each day! Alas! Not too long after this, I woke up one day to the petrifying noise of my wife wailing and the servants' lamentations most severely!

Before I even asked them what had happened, I knew!

I knew!

Oh, a father's heart always knows!

**Had any man on earth from the beginning of time felt what I felt that day?
Oh, no man on earth till the end of time had felt what maddening pain tore my
heart and was ripping my life into a trillion pieces!**

**I could neither stand nor sit!
I could not speak!
I could not even breathe!**

**My world shattered! My life became blurry! All my past became empty! I
doubted my own existence! I thought it must be a nightmare for if it weren't
then certainly, I wouldn't survive this pain.**

**I had thought I would die too in this languishing woe!
I welcomed death to take me wherever it had taken my child!**

**Oh, I could not bury the child! I would not bury her! But when the responsible
men and women from the neighborhood came after one week and forced my
Fatimah away from me, I went and lay myself in the grave beside her small
body, clasping the tiny and fragile infant in my arms, pressing the lost jewel to
my bereaving heart, hoping never to part. The world did not heed to my grief,
and the mourners chided me, ordering me to release my child. When I
refused, they interfered physically, and it took many a strong men to pull us
apart.**

**Hot tears came rushing into my eyes, dimming my vision. The flowing tears
blotted from my sight of the cemetery and visages of the mourners. The soft
summer sun was gone, and I could feel the tears trickling down my cheeks,
dripping over my lips and soaking my beard.**

My Fatimah was dead, but I could not believe this was true.

My baby gone? How could I take it?

**I did not accept her death. This could not be true, I said to myself! But behold,
the tiny corpse was carried to the burial; and mourners went and returned
without tears. As my darling child was being lain therein, and an elderly man
read the funeral prayers, how I wept even during those prayers, wrought with
a heavy heart and troubled mind, knowing that no mortal comfort or well-
meant words or deceiving eulogy could heal my sorrow. No wealth or succor
could drive this sadness from my mind. My child was gone, and my brief days
of fatherhood had died along with it. Oh, the bitterness of sorrow I felt! No
earthly treasures could exude the agony of pain out of my heart. For days, I
tried to sleep in vain, and when slumber came, I awoke again, and found my
grief not the least lessened.**

**Every day, I burst into a flood of tears at the most unexpected time and place,
for a father's heart knows no respite from grief!**

**This flood of tears made me appear to my peers a nuisance. They believed I
had defied all established civility by my brazen emotion. I ran away from
people and found myself in the middle of a marsh, wherein I gazed at the stars
that seemed so far away from earth and yet they shined brightly! I prayed to**

God in Heaven: My Allah! I beg You to perfect Your mercies in me, and grant me the perfect peace, which shall never be swallowed up in pain.

After praying in these simple words, I retired myself to my dismal bed. But now, when there were none to see or hear me, I fell upon my knees on the floor; and, hiding my face in my hands, wept such tears as no man ever had cause to weep before me!

The next day, my routine was the same. I continued to go to the burial place of my daughter. Having availed myself of the dying twilight to search for the path that led to the cemetery, I marched briskly via the high roads and sat down to rest beside my beloved daughter's grave.

The freezing breeze whipped dismally over the roads, and I let my face get soaked by the chilled rainwater, trying to wash away the traces of tears from my cheeks. It was a terrible night for me. The pitchers of intoxicants I consumed made me feel doubly nauseas.

Oh, how stiff I felt when I got up the next morning, and the effects of nausea was still present. When the day closed upon me again, I sat in the miserable damp air and began to feel that choking sadness once more. I sought a place where I could acquire a large collection of wine and intoxicants and I began to wander drearily across the city roads. I walked for hours, but the inns were closed. I knocked on village gates but those were shut. I continued searching for a store where I could purchase and devour wine, but fatigue began to overpower me. My body was sore and the tired legs trembled beneath me. But I crawled along a melancholy path and found a large collection of alcoholic drinks beside an old cottage. I drank all night to forget about the miseries of that day. At the break of dawn, misery haunted me again, and I drank intoxicants all day in order to forget about the sadness of the night. Since the day, my infant daughter had died, this was the life I lived, and with each day, more and more episodes of distress deluged my living hours. My youth was becoming a restless sea of sorrow and my once ordinary life had become a solicitous picture of grief.

Certain sorrow has its bound, and mankind can fashion a name for it. There was a name for those women who lost their husbands. We considered them to be widows.

There was a name for those children who lost their parents. We called them orphans.

There was a name for husbands who lost their wives.

But there was no name on heaven or on earth for those parents who had lost their only child!

Because no word can describe the painful anguish and bitter sadness that burns the heart of a father who had lost his only daughter!

Oh, Life! Oh, Death! Oh, how I grieved for the lost love of the infant! In a moment, I had been deprived of being a father. In the darkness of the night, I gave way to the tears which I restrained during the day for fear of strangers deriding me, and for a brief moment, my heart reposed upon the tears that overflowed from my eyes, and soaked my beard.

For days, I could not accept the fact that she was gone. Her childish art works and paintings, her small clothes and every symbol in my house and roads made me so hysterical that local well-wishers feared for my sanity.

After her death For a brief period, I did not believe my child was gone! And so I could not cry or mourn for a daughter who still was among the living! Finally, one fine morning, a distant relative came to visit me, and they brought their young daughter, who resembled my own Fatimah so intricately, that I smiled and beckoned her near, calling her Fatimah! When the child frowned at my error, I suddenly remembered that this could not be my daughter for my child was gone! I had been unable to weep properly before that moment, but when my tears came, they spilled like an avalanche. My tears burst forth pitilessly like a beast who had no dearth of sorrow. My eyes shed tears so mercilessly as though it was a monster that would tear my heart into pieces. I rushed to my daughter's burial place and sobbed: Oh, my daughter! Your father mourns you!

Oh, my child! You have broken your father's heart most terribly!
Oh, my beautiful child! Oh, my soul and waking reason for my life and me!
Why have you left your father to this desolate and lonely world! Oh, what was left for me in this lonely world where I was but an outcast, forced to mourn my child in the wilderness of time? There was no more joy in life for me! How could a man ever laugh or smile freely as though his child shall never be taken away from him? How can men and women laugh and eat with leisure as though death shall never visit them, or take away their loved ones without cause or reason?

This world seemed to me a dreary and terrible place! All my happiness was in the grave with my child! All my pain and all my sufferings were bursting from the corner of my heart! Oh, what can a man even know about suffering and pain, and how can they understand my ethereal pain, fear and sadness? I knelt beside the grave of my child, and I groaned in anguish! Oh, my child, are you alright or has the coldness of the grave given you chills and fever? Oh, the darling of my heart! I have failed you, my child, and I could not keep you alive!

Oh, why did you have to be born only to be taken away from me?
For months, I wailed over my daughter's grave. My life was beyond desolate and no one could imagine the pain that I suffered during that period of my life!

Rain pounded the gravel roads, and the skeletal houses in the street looked dismal and gloomy. How could human beings seek happiness in these dreary cities? I burned in anguish, and could only think of consuming more wine, in order to forget about the terrible heartache, I was experiencing. How many other parents had to suffer like me and lose their only child? Could anyone ever understand what terrible sadness besieged my mind? Powerful gale continued to glaze the streets and the clouds and mist grayed the town to a ghostly translucence. And in every blast of wind, I heard the final moments of my daughter's life.

Oh, why had my Lord given her to me and then taken her away?!
What sin of mine had caused Him to punish me thus?

Oh, if mankind were to gather and deposited all their anguish in one heap, never could they fathom the pain that now tore my soul into wild madness! Slowly, and slowly I had let all of life's pleasures go and sunk into a maddening routine.

I wished death upon myself and knew not how to hasten it!

So deep was my grief that I tried to forget this intense pain of loss by turning to my favorite companion: Wine.

I drank and drank until my mind was numb with forgetfulness.

Alcohol and liquor offered me a temporary respite from the intense sadness I was feeling.

I drank all day to forget about the sadness I felt the previous night!

I drank wine all night to forget about the terrible bereavement that besieged me during the day!

This was my habit, and with each day that passed, my sadness only increased, as did my thirst for intoxicants.

I drained a large bucket of wine, and finally gathered enough courage to return to my daughter's graveyard, and addressed her in my most fatherly manner: Oh, my daughter, why have you left your father and forsaken him to this lonely bitter world?!

Oh, my daughter! What have you done to your father's heart? What terrible grief beset your father's soul now that you have died? Darling child! What have you done to me?! For which sin of mine did I deserve this bitter pain?

Oh, the false world who breaks the hearts of people until they lose their soul! Why have you taken the body of my daughter away from me and swallowed her into your cold lonely world of the dead?

Oh, cruel world! Do you find contentment in my suffering and laugh at my agony!

When my child passed away, and was gone from me, I hated my God! I despised my Creator! I tried to drink day and night, hoping to forget my misery. But aside from the smell of raw whiskey and wine on my breath, I did not find solace in drinking intoxicants.

But I was still drowning in sorrow and could not cope with the death of my daughter.

Why was my child dead? Why had the Lord tortured me thus?!

When I was so strong and believed I was untouchable by fragile human feelings towards others, how did my Lord punish me so severely?

Oh, how I hated His unchanging commandments! I despised all Goodness!

And I declared an unannounced war on his commandments and sunk into my old habits that I practiced in my youthful days of sin, hate and debauchery!

Rain began once more, and I felt my heart tremble in fright and apprehension. My darling daughter would be petrified of the roaring wind and the upcoming gale! Oh, she was ever so frightened of the storm and lightning!

As Cold rainwater continued to thunder over the empty fields and lightening dazzled the ruins of cottages in the rundown town. A harsh wind was blowing across the field, and the sulking shadows cast by the houses upon the hills looked sepulchral and death-like. I was alone in my sorrow, forced to live in obscurity with my grief. Alas! I wanted nothing to do with goodness. For I was certain that goodness made men suffer. I wept bitterly often. Why should I be good when God still punished me?

Woe to me, for I had no reason to survive this pitiful life!

If my transgression did not destroy me, then I knew my grief would. What good was this life when all the loved ones are gone, and the world feels empty and unforgivable?

Walking in a hurried pace, I once more visited my daughter's resting place and stood forlornly by the headstone, and whispered words of comfort to my child who was dead. When I could not contain my grief any longer, I sighed bitterly and croaked:

Oh, my daughter! Your father mourns you and he cannot find any reason to continue living in this accursed world! Darling child! With you gone from this dreary earth, what reason has he to live for?

Those who witnessed me grieving assured me that my grief will pass. But my pain had not subdued even after many months. Those people had said time heals all wounds but with me, time made my wound deeper and deeper until I wished for a speedy death every day because I felt that this human heart of mine could not tolerate this unbearable pain that was torturing my entire being!

Oh, all my world is lonely and my heart sad and my life empty!

Is this life worth at all to love or cherish?!

Is this the life human being live and fight for?

Can there be any reason for me to continue living in this accursed world where all familial love, and happiness must come to a bitter and painful end? Oh, heart that breaks! Oh, soul that has lost its strength! Try to find contentment in the words of your Lord!

All the generations that came before us has passed on and all after us has to pass away and yet we fight to live longer in this unworthy world and strive to gain useless wealth and frivolous fame!

I lamented again and again, and cried unto the world that was deaf to my shouts of bereavement:

What have you done to me, O miserable world!?

What have you done to my soul that I cannot speak without dissolving into tears?!

What have you done to my soul, O Life, that keeps me awake at night with echoes of my own sobs?

The life I lived showed no pity, and I continued to bear the brunt of terrible grief each day. To dull the pain, I consumed wine, hoping to forget my agony, and secretly desiring to drink myself to death, because I wished I would die from overconsumption and rejoin with my daughter.

For weeks and months, I refused to partake any meals, or food, and I only drank intoxicants as hard wine.

Everyday, During the daytime I drank to forget my pains of the night and during the night I would take wine to forget the pain of my day. I often lay passed out on the roadside, and remained heavily drunk most of my living hours. This was the only way I could think of coping with that loss which made my life beyond unbearable!

Alas! What had happened to me that I suffered so deeply?! Neighbors and former friends laughed and mocked me in disbelief and some pitied me, and they thought I was insane to grieve so desperately over the loss of a child. If only they would understand the pain I felt in a single moment, and if one second of my grief were sprinkled upon them and dissipated over their entire life, then these people would know! Only then would they understand my sentiments, and they would not think of me to be mad!

Distant relatives and kind friends tried to give me company and offer words of comfort, but there was nothing that could calm my heart for I valued no one. I was a proud and arrogant man whose heart was barricaded from all humans and only my daughter could enter upon it. And from the second Fatimah was born, she had become a part of me. She had overtaken all parts of me and when she was gone, I myself was gone.

I could not think of her to be alone in the grave and sometimes gave into passionate wailings near her resting place at the nighttime when all careless inhabitants of the world were sleeping. Ah, Life! O Death! O Time! O Tears! If only I knew how my heart's darling was doing now!

Then the thought and the denials returned again, and I cried to myself: No, she cannot be gone!

God did not make us only to turn us into dust!

No, my daughter was an angel with such love and such loyalty and such goodness that verily, such qualities can never be gone!

Oh, my beloved little one! How with impatience I await every moment of this tedious day, hoping my darling daughter would appear before me again.

I sighed, weeping intermittently in the lingering hours of the evening.

With enthusiastic haste, I rushed to that dear place of my garden where my daughter often stood, admiring the colorful petals of the roses, but who was more beauteous than every flower that ever bloomed in this earth.

I wondered hitherto, hoping my dear one would return but, alas! nowhere could my child be found. Once more, I waited till darkness overtook the cloud-decked skies, and I sat forlorn, my face streaming with unrestrained tears.

I repressed the tides of sorrow surging in my breast and withdrew from the garden.

Lonely in my abode, and abandoned to wallow in grief's deepest woes, I remembered the infant child that had once been my own, but now was gone from my life. The mere thought of my deceased daughter made me feel dead to all my life's happiness, as fresh tears poured on my pale cheeks. Oh, world! I cried in silence. Take back all your useless wonders and bounteous delight. I care not for all of fortune's wealth and wine. But bring back my child to me, and let me call my Fatimah mine! Cursed be this world and woe to these lands, for I have lost the most gentle one that lived. My most lovely child now dwelled beneath the mud, besmeared with foreign dust. O the cruel earth that had made my fairest Fatimah reside with the dead!

O my sweetest daughter! Forever shall tears flow from your father's streaming eyes.

With trembling lips, I exclaimed with great emotion. Oh, my darling daughter in her grave! How I tremble to think of her distress in the loneliness of the cold dark abode beneath the moldy earth. Would not this sorrow break any father's heart? Oh, how I loved Fatimah, and how all doted upon the darling of my eyes!

Then, raising my eyes to the heavens, I cried:

My Merciful Maker! Do not cease showering mercy and compassion towards me, and aid me through this terrible sea of sorrow that consumed my whole heart!

There must be a heaven and there must be kind-eyed angels there who would take care of her and good-hearted guardians who would one day return Fatimah to me!

I could not live for another second here on this earth if I did not believe I would be reunited with my baby one day.

Indeed, I would have raged across earth and ravaged all of mankind if I thought that my life was so meaningless as to become a worthless pile of dust, or if I thought we, like jungle beasts, would likely perish into nothingness, and all love, affection, good deeds, generous charities would disappear to the void! I sighed morosely, and spoke to God: "My Maker! Even if I am destined to go to Your Hell, for I do not expect Your forgiveness for someone as unworthy as I am, then I beseech You to let me see my daughter once more and keep her with You in Your Paradise, and knowing my child is safe, I shall burn in Your hell without complain!

Oh, mankind! What do you know about the pain of departure?! What do you know of a pain that makes men mad?!

Can any mortal understand a fraction of the emotion I am feeling?

What do people know of love? How many of them had a daughter like me?

Then how could they possibly know how I am suffering?

With utter misery as my only feeling and a pain that threatened to cut my heart into millions of pieces, I wondered about the Old City and saw people milling about the stores and markets cheerfully, and I wondered how man could be so forgetful and not know about my wretched state?

A handful of mourners stood murmuring prayers to their beloved one's departed soul, but I wished to be alone in my grief. And after I was left alone in the silence of the gloomy cemetery, I again burst into uncontrolled tears.

At times, I knelt in devotion, despite being an irreligious man, and prayed to the God of Abraham for the dear soul of my departed daughter.

These prayers unto Thy Divinity be the ransom, O Lord! I bind my heart with the bond of faith and trust in Thee to keep my daughter under Thy mercy and sever not her soul from Thy celestial protection!

My beloved daughter had died suddenly in her prime, and though her life was exceedingly short, it had been filled with beautiful wonders and sweet adventures, and each time I stood next to the tiny wooden bed that had belonged to her, I would dissolve into passionate tears. I resolved to keep her infancy alive, and my daughter's history adorned every corner of my dwelling. To remove the fear of forgetting, I took care to preserve all the childish treasures and toys which my keenly observant daughter has. Never would I allow anyone to remove these precious infantile toys from this abode. She was a little girl bearing a golden heart, but as a grieving father, I was stricken with fear of the unknown. My child was supposed to be present in this room, skipping freely as a child always does. Her stuffed toys were here, but my daughter was no more. Frozen with grief, I gazed at the precious piles of toy artifacts of my child, and wept bitterly, the echoes of my cries ringing in the small room. When my misty eyes cleared, I was once more surprised to see that the room looked the same, the bed was still made, and the small figurines and colorful toys lay haphazardly around, as though my little girl had not taken leave of this world permanently, but was outside in that yonder garden. Surely, she will return, I said to myself.

I prayed so that no terror of darkness or horrors of the grave interposed itself on my child, by force or by fraud, by night or by day.

Oh, my Creator! Oh, Allah! I ask Thee for a forgiveness which my soul deserves not! And yet I have no one but You to turn to because all my life has gone away and all my past is blurred with disobedience and self loathe! Within the vast court of my memory, I find no solace in anything that existed in the past, and no joy in the heaven, earth, sea, and I seek naught of whatever is therein, besides a heart free of bereavement. Forgive me, O my Allah! I have only You! I sin against You! I disobey Your commandments and yet I turn to You! For who have I but You? Who has my daughter but You?

Winters became Spring, and grasses bloomed, but I did not find the colorful foliage of the city forests alluring or comforting. I grieved for my own loss, and every waking hour, I remembered the darling child who had died. This sadness was uncontainable. In despair, I consumed so much wine that I ultimately became a self-consumer of my sorrows. I sought solace in wine, hoping the paralyzing effects of the drink would intoxicate me to a state of unconsciousness, and I dearly hoped that for those few moments, my heart would receive comfort and forget the aching grief that gnawed at every fiber of my body. There was no more sense of joy in my life, and I felt like a colossal shipwreck that was being cast away into a land of sorrow.

Day after day, I lingered at the graveyard where my daughter rested. I did not want the poor dear child to be alone in the cold subterranean immortal world. For hours, I spoke in the most soothing infant voice, choking back my tears, as I assured the child that her father would never abandon her or leave her eternal bedside. It was in this memorable vigil that I overheard a song. Some passerby was entertaining locals with the recitation of a folk song, but the echoes of his shrill voice interrupted my quiet time with my child. Drowned in a drunken stupor, I ran to the singing man and raised my voice, howling in frustration, and demanded he cease singing at once. I warned them that my baby girl was buried in this cemetery and this incessant sound of his song would disrupt her childish sleep. "Let my child rest! I demanded in a wild tone, but the audience marveled at my reaction, and called me foolish for thinking my daughter will be vexed by this noise. The singer protested my interference and continued to sing. I thought how the dear delight of my heart would suffer from this uncouth gibberish spewing from their lips so I attempted to remove them from the street, using physical force. But the men struggled, and absorbed in my severe emotions, I hit them violently, striking the singer with my hands and shouting at them to leave my daughter's resting place at once. The commotion I started had attracted the attention of many of the city dwellers and soon, the law enforcement officials were brought in. Armed men who upheld the law surrounded me, and they all chided me for breaking the peace of this town, and they dragged me to a prison, locking me inside a dark dreary cell where I was told to contemplate on my actions. After a long hour in the prison cell, the lethargic effects of the alcohol began to fade, and I was no longer intoxicated. But what misery befell me then! As though the night turned to day, and showered unwelcome light on the barren, barren earth, all my pain rebirthed in my heart, and the loss of my toddler became a mournful episode that was recurring again and again. The authorities of the city noticed my sobriety, and said I had unjustly struck a country singer without provocation, but in vain I protested that this was not true. The singing man was not desisting from disturbing my dear daughter's slumber, despite my repeated requests. In a state of drunken frenzy, I lashed out, and hit the man, hoping to ensure that my dear child could sleep without vexations. But oh, what terrible storm of sadness besieged my mind, and the thought of my dear child kept me awake in the dreary atmosphere of this cold cell. I began to wonder if my dearest Fatimah was enclosed in a distressing place such as this? No, it could not be! Providence would show a smiling face to my child. My darling daughter could never rest in the dark and cold shallow grave. With renewed agitation in my heart, I rose and cried to the guard to release me at once. My daughter is alone in the cemetery, and oh, I must be at her side! It was a building which housed inmates and criminals, but all around me, I discerned only the ambience of death. I looked forlornly at the impenetrable slits walls and studied the narrow corridors and resolved not to allow such human barriers prevent me from being at the bedside of my dead child. I pleaded and entreated for reprieve, and begged the guard to release me. How I tried in vain to make them understand my child shall not be able to survive in that dreadful and dark pit in the cemetery ground. There was not answer, and my pleas echoed around the stone walls of the prison, bouncing from cell to cell, floating away like the lost song of a winter bird that never lived to see the Spring. The dark and imposing prison walls

were set deep into a steep rocky cliff, and the high fences prevented me from escaping. I longed to be with my daughter again, and as the dark shadows of the night loomed over my cell, I slipped away from the direction where the guard's tower was located, and scaled the walls of the prison building, eager to reunite with my Fatimah.

Due to the stifled rays of sunshine flowing in, I could tell that it was a bright summer day outside, and yet the prison corridor held the grim ambiance of death, desolation and decay.

The sole of my bare feet pounded against the cold stone floor as I raced to freedom, and returned to my daughter's resting place. No sooner had I crossed the threshold of the prison, clear night air rushed to greet me, as though the cold wind was bearing a message from my child.

Upon arriving at the cemetery, I noticed the soil was moist, and there was a lingering musty scent in the air. The splash of water pooling near the engraved headstones bore testimony to recent rain. Ah, the rain! My brain felt as though it would explode in rage and desperation. How could I not take precaution to shelter my darling child from the rain? How would my Fatimah rest in her little grave if cold rainwater poured over the cemetery and seeped into the beloved space? How could my child survive in the damp and moist earth surrounding her? I raced to-and-fro, seizing planks of wood from the roadside stores, and gathering draperies from neighboring homes. Then I built a small tent directly above my daughter's tiny grave, hoping the shade will be sturdy enough to protect her from future rain and calamities!

When the next bout of rain burst from the blackened clouds, I throw myself over the tiny patch of ground beneath which my daughter lay and protected her from getting soaked by the icy rain, and I remained in this position until the rain ceased. In this dreary state, I fell into an exhausted slumber and became unconscious. Hours later, I awoke and found myself in my home. Alarmed, I leaped to my feet, and asked those around me what had happened. Sympathetic neighbors narrated to me that they had found me unresponsive, laying over my daughter's grave, and they lifted me up and brought me to my dwelling abode. For a few moments, I hesitated, for there was a sign on the calendar which indicated today was a special day. It was my daughter's birthday!

I drank wine all day to forget the pain of losing my only child, and finally, when the gray fog swirling over the city dissipated at noon, I resolved to celebrate my daughter's life in the most fitting way. In a drunken slurred voice, I perched on the top of the city center building, and invited everyone to come and join me in my daughter's birthday party. Several passersby rebuked me for being foolish. They reminded me that my daughter was dead, and deceased people do not require birthday parties. However, consuming so many bottles of wine had dulled my intellect and I raged and raved at them, and warned them not to miss my special invitation. That evening, I returned home and collected all my money, and purchased expensive utensils and prepared a suitable feast for my daughter's party. I knew hundreds of people were scheduled to arrive, so I instructed my cook to roast large pots of food and desserts. However, night fell over the land and I stood eagerly beside the giant dining table laden with food, and waited for my guests to arrive. I admired the ice sculptures around the flower-decked dining hall, and rearranged the golden and silver goblets, certain that my guests would arrive

promptly and drink to my daughter's happiness and success. The clock chimed ominously, echoing in a mournful tone. The hours ticked away. My daughter's birthday was fading away, but no guests appeared. I sent my doorman to knock from house to house, and summon the people to come and honor my daughter's birthday. No one came. Such sadness befell me that I could not speak or move. With a heavy heart, I clutched the large wine pitcher on the table and drowned the entire content in one gulp. But the pain of losing my daughter was still fresh in my mind, and in an attempt to drown away my sorrows, I again gulped more and more wine, until my senses had become dull and I was only partially conscious. Once more, I waited for the guests to come and celebrate my daughter's birthday. It was futile, so none of my neighbors deemed it appropriate to celebrate a dead child's birthday party. The clock chimed midnight, and I began to realize no guests would arrive, and in my state of drunkenness had become severe and in a frenzy of maddening rage, I screamed and shouted within the vacant dining hall, and tried to vent my frustration by smashing the cutlery and utensils on the table. How could these foolish people not understand my daughter's birthday party is an important event? Why did they not realize that this invitation meant the whole world to my child? Why did they think my daughter was dead and gone? Such bitter thoughts flooded my mind and I continued to smash all the crystal glasses that were to be raised to celebrate my daughter's birthday, and I continued to break the porcelain tea sets and utensils one by one, all the goblets and plates had been shattered. I felt renewed anguish over the loss of my only child, and sinking to my knees amidst the shards of glass lying on the floor, I wept like a child. Oh, how desperately I missed my daughter!

Why should I be indentured to a world that seeks to ruin me while hiding miseries behind a mask of love? This sorrow-filled land that grins at our loss and lies to our dreams spreads out false years before our feet, deceiving us into the obscure night of atrophy and misery! How wretched the reality of this life had been! How it dethrones noblemen without warnings, and wipe out great cities in a single day? How swiftly one loses all wealth and joy? How unexpectedly do the loved ones become deceased, while the survivors are condemned to live amidst the woeful strife?

Oh, my daughter who had died! She shall not be aware of the tears which I shed nor know of the sorrow that dwells in my soul! This world had beguiled and deceived me and I can only hope the life that will follow will not snatch away my beloved child from me again. Never had I wept more fitfully in my life than my daughter's burial day. Oh, how my heart shuddered as the hearse slowly bore her away from me! I can now be alive by believing that death has swept my infant to a better isle, where she rests beside a peaceful shore by a soundless sea.

With a torn and bleeding heart, I walked aimlessly around the city squares and lashed out miserably at anyone who accosted me. I halted at the roadside leading to my darling child's resting place, and my anguished tears flowed unstopably, soaking the earth of the cemetery. My wails and audible sighs of grief echoed in the evening winds, and my heart, of hopes and dreams bereft, sought a rendezvous with death.

The next day, I awoke to new miseries. Oh, how I cursed life for letting me live! How I pleaded with death to take me away to the land of the dead so I could be near my child! How could this baby girl survive in the cold grave? What forces shall tend to her or comfort her in the loneliness of the cold grave?

I drank so madly that I became severely intoxicated again. In vain, I tried to make people understand my pain. But they could not feel my pain! Those who saw me languishing beneath shades of cypress trees called me a drunken fool. Others called me mad. But I was grieving. And in my grief, I was alone. I had no other living soul to comfort my aching heart! My daughter was dead, and oh, it was as though everyone else in this world had turned away from me!

But what uncouth my behavior was! How could I seek to accompany my daughter in heaven when only sin and indecent behavior beset me? Had my own daughter been alive and seen the volume of my sins, even she would have despised me!

I could not control my sadness and cried bitterly whenever the effect of wine would start waning away and to control my convulsions and sobbing, I had to immediately take another bottle of wine.

Such was the way I passed all my bitter days.

Pain seared inside me every time I thought of my darling daughter. With maddening pain and wild tears that threatened to spill out from my eyes, and soak my beard, I mourned the death of my dearest Fatimah. This grief was tearing my soul away and I sought solace in the only thing that I knew would help me numb this desolate feeling. And so, I turned to wine-again and again , and drunk myself to oblivion. I drank all day to forget about the terrible sadness of the night, and I drank all night to forget about the dreary day. It was one of those days when I had taken so much wine that I couldn't differentiate between the path leading to my abode and the road to city center, when I suddenly saw a huge snake chasing me.

The huge snake reared its frightening head, and suddenly started chasing me! I was horrified in shock and disbelief. I craned my neck to get a closer look and see whether the giant python had gained ground, I was petrified to witness the fiercest creature that ever existed. I was nearly frozen in fear, for I was certain that never had any man imagined a snake could be so black, so humongous that its length could fill the breadth of a massive river, and it had fiery large eyes that had liquid fire flowing out from it. Oh, it was the most horrible sight, as the snake glared at me with lynx-like eyes and rushed towards me with wide open gaping mouth. The snake pursued me ferociously, and I ran to get as far away from it as possible. As it pursued me, I knew not how I ran so fast, for never before in my life had I run so fiercely or desperately. With flaying arms and legs, I scissored over the paths and struggled for breath. The deadly snake was chasing after me like a jungle prey, and giving out an unearthly roar.

I ran and ran and ran. Every bone in my body was sore and felt as though it would break. I heard a noise behind me, and saw that the snake was drawing closer. It was about to lunge towards me, and I tripped, sprawling headfirst into the harsh terrain.

My heart was pounding wildly as if I had lost control of it. I ran blindly, charging forward, taking every turn I saw, but I did not falter or stop. I looked left. I looked right. And as the huge python pursued me, I turned right and ran, and when I faced another obstacle, I turned left and ran with all the strength I never knew I had.

My situation was so maddeningly painful that I began to lose my grasp on reality. What frightening prospects awaited me! Was I more afraid of the fire pouring out of its blazing eyes, or was the fear of being bitten by a snake so beastly and so venomous overpowering all other human faculties? I could sense the bitter and deadly poison seething from the snake's breath. I could not imagine what the creature would do to me.

Oh, the fear that I felt! How could anyone imagine or understand the terror in my heart as I ran? My heart threatened to burst out of my ribcage and fresh terror seized me. In this terrible fear and extreme anguish, I did not know which direction I was running towards, or even where I was.

My heart burned from exertion, as I flew across the rocky ground. This exertion had robbed my lung of air. When faced with such deadly fear, a man cannot function and loses the ability to comprehend or think fast enough or come up with a strategy to save oneself.

I ran with such fierceness to save my life from that deadly bestial creature, that I was certain no human ever ran so desperately before. Such a terrible snake was never seen by any human before.

I cannot tell what I was more afraid of? Of losing my life, or succumbing to the vengeance of the maniac snake?

It was relentless in pursuing me, so I ran and ran, until I felt as though my heart would burst out of my chest. I exerted myself so much, that I feared my soul was seconds away from being ripped away from me by the monstrous creature which was chasing me viciously and O the panic I felt in that moment! Never before had anyone felt or imagined how it was to feel such fright! Nor could they know unless they too have been pursued by a deadly snake like this one.

My arms and feet started to shake violently and I ran, aghast with such blind terror that I could not make myself look back at the horrifying snake without freezing in terror. The beastly creature did not stop chasing me and pounced upon the ground mercilessly as it slithered endlessly after me.

I ran faster, gaining speed, but so did the gigantic beastly snake.

Then as the snake gained ground, I saw the faint glow of a frail looking old man, enrobed in all-white attire at a distance. In this dire situation, my strength had almost failed me but the fear of a terrible death made me muster every last ounce of strength for survival and I dragged my nearly paralyzed feet and panted and trudged over the sides of a tall mountain.

As I neared the snowy mountain, I came across an old, withered man, who was dressed in fine and elegantly pressed white clothes.

He looked so feeble with such a long flowing white beard, that I was astonished to see he even had the strength to remain standing on his feet! However, his clothes were bright white and glowed like a light and some ethereal brightness was illuminating from his face.

As he stood there with the help of a walking stick, I notice his back was so bent with age that he could scarcely stay still.

I ran with desperation until I came near him.

I shouted. "Oh, old man! Help me, and save me from this malicious snake!"

I tried to cry out again for help, but I experienced a sharp difficulty in my utterance. "For God's sake, help me!"

There was no reply, so I cried with the passion of a wounded spirit. "Have pity upon me, O gentle old man! Have pity upon me!" When the man did not answer me at once, I shrieked, "Can you not see what terror is seizing me? Could you know how I am suffering in fright?"

The man spoke, with tearful eyes, and pleaded: "Young man, I am too weak and feeble. How can I help you?"

I shouted in terror and indignation. "Help me! I have no one else to turn to! I had been running for my life, and there was no one to save me!"

IN a pleading voice, the old man spoke: "I am too weak," replied he. "I am too old and frail to help you against such a mighty foe, truly it is beyond my power to help you. But you must go on running. Perhaps you might find someone who can help you save yourself from this deadly snake. Perhaps you can try to hide over the mountain. Perhaps the snake might not be able to climb the hill as fast!"

As I listened to feeble old man, my body convulsed in maddening exhaustion and pain. The wild terror I was facing had frozen the blood in my veins, and I could feel my hands shaking violently like winter leaves!

But I had to obey the old man's advice, and so with every ounce of strength, I forced myself to climb the mountain he pointed out to me.

Every muscle of my body screamed in pain, but I had to gather enough strength to pull up my body through such a deadly terrain and scale such an imposing height.

With fresh fear grappling my heart, and anguish threatening my very sanity, I swore to not look back, the terror of meeting the snake's eyes made me too paralyzed with fright.

No! I must not look back at the deadly beast which was chasing me!

It took so much strength and so much pain to climb the white mountain wall, but I had finally reached the top of the hill, but then what I saw nearly caused my heart to stop, for the scene before me shook my soul so turbulently that I cried out in fear and wailed in a bitterly hysterical sound.

Below the hill on the other side was a pit of liquid fire, resembling an erupting volcano hole, and to my utter horror, I saw men being dragged by chains and thrown into the center of the bubbling red flames, and as their screams thundered through the mountains, they burned in the molten lava.

Tall and strong and uniformed creatures were dragging people into the pit of fire, and chained them to the lava so that they could not escape.

Ah! So disturbing was the scene, and so deadly the violence and so maddening the destruction, that I became sick and vomited violently. Oh, how my soul gave in and decided to die, while my heart gave up the thought of self-

preservation as the sight of this despair, and momentarily forgetting that I would not turn back, I whipped my face away from the terrible molten fire. I forcibly averted my eyes, and my sight fell upon the deadliest scene that ever befell me!

To my horror, the petrifying snake had just reached the peak and seeing me standing still, the beast nearly pounced on me.

Oh, if I only could describe the fright! I had raced all my life, and was the fastest runner in my city, but never before had I run this fast, as I sprinted with a burst of madness and moved my legs wildly, trying to create as much distance between me and the fiery snake!

With a pit of fire and molten lava on my right and the snake on my left, I became disoriented and stumbled and fell repeatedly! Yet, I forced myself back on my feet and fled from the snake with every drop of blood left in my heart.

As I reached the bottom of the mountain, there stood the old man with flowing white beard and white clothes and a soft glow of light illuminating his aristocratically aged face.

I cried out in frenzied madness: Oh, old man! Help me! For the sake of the almighty God, help me and save me! I have begged for your help before! As I became hysterical with unimaginable fear and hopeless sobbing, I implored to him: For pity's sake, help me! Help me!

The old man looked as though he was trying to help me and asked me to come near. Then he said: Come! And go towards this path! Perhaps you can save yourself or hide from the creature who is pursuing you.

By this time, I was almost dead with pain and wild terror and was overwhelmed by my own frightening sobs. But I trusted the old man's words and I followed the path the old man showed me.

Once more, too afraid to look back, I ran with more vigor, nearly collapsing to the ground and becoming a prey to the otherworldly beast, but with that last drop of hope that a man has before death overcomes him, I ran and ran and ran until the dark valleys around me started to change color and I noticed the deathly ambience and fiery atmosphere was slowly turning into greenery.

Oh, sweet was the scene of such sunlight and such bright greenery and how beautiful were the soft hills and colorful gardens that saw, and as I ran deeper into the valley, my surroundings became more welcoming and beautiful. Suddenly, I thought my ears were imagining sounds, but then I heard it clearly.

The unmistakable singing voice of children's' laughter!

But it could not be! How could I hear the laughter of children ringing through the valley?

Surely, it was impossible! This was a dangerous place, and I was being hunted by a beastly prey but how was I seeing a green garden around me, and soft sunlight bathing the grass and cheerful laughter of children ringing in my ears?

It was real! It was true!

Suddenly, I saw children running along the hill, and when they saw me, they chortled and became excited. They began to skip towards me with much joy! They looked fearless and happy, unaware that I was being pursued by a deadly snake that looked worse than any beast that ever existed.

I tried in vain to shout and warn them of the impending danger, and I tried to beg them to stay away from me, lest the vile predator behind me target them. However, the children ignored my warning and ran towards me.

My heart had almost given up hope by now, and I was ready to be consumed and killed by the monstrous snake. So, in order to save those children, I then tried to run away from them, and to my heart's shock, I thought the sound of a familiar voice wafted to my ears. It must have been a dream or wishful thinking! But I was sure I heard my daughter's familiar ringing laughter with which she charmed me on earth.

I froze in my place! Former pain flooded back, and I began to wonder, was it really my daughter? Could it be that she came back?

Was my daughter really playing with so many other lovely children?

As I came closer to the center of the green valley, there was no doubt remaining in my mind that the laughter had indeed belonged to my daughter, the jewel of my heart and the life of my soul!

My Fatimah! My baby!

The children who had seen me a moment ago now were all summoning her, calling out: O Fatimah! Look who is here! Come and see your father!

"Hurry, O Fatimah," said another child. "Your father has come to see you!"

Ah, while pain and fear tore through every vein of my heart and I believed my every last hope had been destroyed, there stood before me, my angelic daughter for whom for my life was given.

My Fatimah looked so ethereal and so beautiful that I could scarcely believe it was the same child that had succumbed to illness. My daughter looked so happy and healthy that my poor heart momentarily forgot that she had ever died.

My darling daughter ran towards me and I raced towards her with such hope, love and such madness that no one could know how I was feeling! How could any human know what feelings burns a father's heart when he sees his lost wish of all dreams when all hope was gone.

My child and I met midway, and she grabbed onto my knees, hugging me with her small arms.

Yes it was my child alright, my baby my own angel , my little piece of heart flesh and blood.

Joy washed over me, but my paternal instinct kicked in, and I remembered the murderous snake chasing me, and all the love I had for my child was now transformed into a blood curdling fear for her safety.

I almost screamed in fear and nearly fainted at the thought of losing my child all over again to the deadly beast that followed me. How could a child fight against the deadly snake, which was more overbearing than even the most powerful and strong man in the universe!

Alas! What have I done?

What have I done? How could I bring along with me unforgiving danger to the very place my daughter was living in? I glanced back and began to think of how I could possibly fight that monster and save my child!

The snake was gaining ground, and it looked more terrifying than ever, and resembled a giant beast.

The malignant creature was still pursuing me, and it bared venomous blood-thirsty fangs as it flashed the fiery face, with lava coming from its eyes. The snake was unearthly large and the eyes were piercingly frightening as though it had unnatural force in it.

It was hunting me with a sort of murderous and cannibalistic violence.

My fear was great, but I also wanted to save my child! How can I fight this beast?

Suddenly, as the snake came very close to me as I screamed in a horror so frightful that I thought it not to be my own.

At that moment my child saw the snake and as she held onto to my garment with one hand, I saw my daughter lift her other small hand and signal the snake to stop.

At once, the giant beast halted and lowered down its monstrous eyes of fire. Then my child made a waving gesture. Immediately the deadly creature bowed its monstrous head and at the sign of her hand, the snake turned around and slithered away.

After the terrible snake was gone, my daughter leapt into my arms and I held her so tightly as if never to let go off her again.

Although my heart was wrecked with so much heartache, fear and pain, I held on to her with a love that no one can imagine. My soul was weak from all the horrors I faced, but when my child began to play with my hair and beard, I forgot all the anguish and horrors that had accosted me.

I clasped her to my heart and cried: "O Fatimah! My daughter, is it really you? Is it really you? Oh, most beloved one! Your father had missed you so!"

My child replied in her singsong voice: "Oh, my father! Why are you sad?"

I wept and said: "Oh, my baby! My angelic child! What is all this? What is happening to me? Where have you been all this time? Your father mourned you and his love for you had tortured him so greatly!"

"Dear father!" Cried out Fatimah! "I am in great happiness! Why do you mourn me?"

She continued in her innocent child voice:

"Oh, my father! When you mourn me, you make me sad and you break my heart for I am in a joyful place!"

"Oh, my father! I am so happy to be in this land and I have many cheerful friends with me!"

"Oh, my father! Why do you cry? Why do you weep?"

I replied in a feeble voice: "My child! I was afraid! Your father was afraid! I still cannot understand why the terrible snake chased me and what has happened here today?"

My darling daughter replied: "Oh, my father! The snake was your sins."

I looked at her in bewilderment, but she continued to explain:

"Dearest father! Your sins were so great and so many in number that it became a most powerful and violent snake. It was your sins that were seeking to torture you and punish you! But worry you not, O my father, for I will save you from that terrible beast, because verily Allah will protect you and keep you safe for me, since you have suffered so much on my account."

"My dear child! It is all so confusing! How do you know so much about this place? I did not know about this valley," I explained tearfully, "had an old frail man not shown me this path!"

Upon hearing this, my daughter spoke again.

"Yes, the old man! Father, he was your good deeds! Your good deeds were so few in number that it had no strength to save you nor could it fight against the sins that had made the snake so strong. Your good deeds merely pointed to you the path to safety, although it could not assist you greatly. The snake, however, had become so powerful that it was about to push you into a pit of fire!"

I was moved to tears, and I asked her why she was dwelling in this place, and who her friends were.

"We are all children of Believers who had passed away in infancy. We shall live in this beautiful place until the day of Resurrection, and we are all waiting patiently to be reunited with our parents and our Allah will let us hold our parents and take them with us to paradise and I am eagerly awaiting to be with you again, dearest father! When you come to us at last, we shall intercede for you with our Lord."

She then recited in the most beautiful tone:

"Has the time not yet come for believers' hearts to be humbled at the remembrance of Allah and what has been revealed of the truth, and not be like those given the Scripture before—those who were spoiled for so long that their hearts became hardened. And many of them are still rebellious." Chapter Iron, Verse 16: (The Final Testament)

The soft melodious recitation of the verse still floated in my ear as the vision slowly faded, and I found myself in the same road where I had been walking. I sank to my knees on the street beneath the night lamps flickering above the road, with the fear of the snake still heavy on my heart, and my surroundings became more and more visible. I had not known whether what I saw was a vision or reality.

I looked everywhere for my daughter and was confused and could not understand whether it was day or night.

I was in a daze, and I struggled to sit up and began to shake violently, eventually broke down, sobbing as I thought of my daughter and her last words. Realizing that she was gone broke my heart all over again! I looked around me. I recognized The narrow streets of my hometown and it were still calm, aside from occasional carriages thundering by, and white curtains fluttered from house windows, and as I saw twilight's last gleam fading into the horizon, I heard the clear and distinct crier call to prayer. The caller was

summoning the faithful people to come to the Masjid to perform the evening prayer after sunset.

Once the call of prayer reached my ears, I was jolted into reality, and the world seemed surreal to me. Suddenly, I tried to focus on the life ahead of me, and it sounded as though the man from the minaret was calling upon me to leave aside the busy chase of wine and wealth, and come to pray to Allah in the House of Worship.

The musical voice of the caller echoed in my ear, and the nostalgic tone brought back bitter memories of the past. This recollection had never before flashed before my mind, and I began to shed such bitter and painful tears, that I had to struggle against my nerves to compose myself.

At last, I calmed myself and seeing my pitiable state, the passersby on the street helped me to my feet.

I was then standing on the roadside, not knowing who to turn to or where to go.

Then the caller once more announced: "Come to prayer ! Come to success! Allah is the greatest!"

Hearing these phrases made me resolute, and I knew I had to pray at once! I must pray to my Lord, who is the most Kind and Great!

He was my Maker ! He was my daughter's Maker!

I must offer prayers to the Allah who has kept my daughter safe in His heaven!

Who else but my Creator could be so merciful?

Who else but He had safe kept my baby? Who else but He loved me still after every unutterable ways I disobeyed His laws! Only He could love me! Only could He still honor me ! And no one but He could still find forgiveness for a broken heart like mine!

In my fatigued state, I wobbled down the street like an old man and limped to the mosque.

I sat down and tried to perform ablution properly and washed my face and hands and wiped the top of my leather shoes and slowly walked towards the prayer mat and joined all the other believing men in their evening prayers.

The prayer of Maghreb began as soon as I entered the mosque and I heard the Imam start the opening prayers with the verse number 16 of the Chapter Iron, of the Final Testament!

My heart pounded and I shook uncontrollably.

Yes! It was the same verse I had heard my daughter read to me!

Yes, indeed, it was the very same verse I had heard only minutes ago, that had been recited to me by my dead daughter.

I became emotional again and although I tried hard to compose myself, my heart betrayed me and eventually my body revolted against all my efforts to control myself and I broke into a violent burst of the most agonizing tears. I thought of my daughter, and I thought of the words of Allah which she quoted.

Were these not the words of the One true God? Why did it seem as though Allah was talking to me and only me?

Unable to contain myself any longer, I feared I might lose consciousness or become sick. Trying in vain to halt the violent trembling of my limbs, I wailed bitterly and feared I would pass away from this life of consciousness and may not be able to finish my prayers!

Weeping, to my Lord, I said: "Oh, Allah! Oh, the broken heart of mine! Oh, the pain and sufferings of this unholy world!"

"Oh, my daughter who was taken away from my life, and whose childish body was snatched away from my embrace, leaving my heart and my lap forever empty!

Oh, the anguish of the heart that find no respite from this imprisoned world!

Oh, Allah! Glory and praise be to You for allowing me see my child and hold her once more! Verily, you took her from me in order to keep her in Your Heaven so she may await me and save me from the terrible pit of fire!"

Breathing heavily, I cried out: "Oh, my dearest daughter! Your father will never sin again nor will he disobey his Lord!"

"Darling child! From this day onward, your father will become worthy of the Lord who cared for his child and forgave him due to the pain of grief which he endured!"

"Oh, my child and the reason for my heartbeat! Your father will shun all sins so he can be with you and your merciful Lord in heaven!

O to heaven where there is no pain or separation from loved ones!

My Lord! Indeed, You have tested me, by taking away my child, and leaving me broken hearted.

Oh, my Allah! You took away my only reason for living, as my daughter was my only wish for surviving! Yet you took her to save my soul and to save her from the shadows of my sins and darkness of my misguidance!

Oh, Lord of the Heavens! Do you see the broken pain that shatters my hearts into million pieces each day? Did you hear my wailings on the break of dawn when I called unto You and asked why You chose to make me suffer!?

My Lord! Whose love but Your love is real?!

Whose mercy but Your mercy is true?!

Whose promise but Your promise is everlasting and truthful!?

When You had kept my beloved daughter safe in Your hands and let her meet me and save me when I was drowning myself in the pits of flame which I earned by my own sins and the fire which I kindled by doing unjust actions committed in anger to Your decisions regarding my life's punishments!?"

As I called upon my Lord, I overheard the Imam speaking from his pulpit, and he uttered some calm words, and I immediately lend my ear to listen attentively;

The pious man said:

"We must always have firm belief in our hearts that each and everything that exists, whether we can see it, whether we cannot see it, we can perceive it or whether we cannot perceive it, whether it is within the realm of the human understanding or whether it is beyond our understanding, everything that exists is the creation of One Allah, and Allah alone had brought it into existence and Allah alone will keep it into existence and this existence will not terminate on its own accord, but it will terminate with the Will of One Allah." When I heard the first sentence coming from the pious speaker's mouth, I was dumfounded with spiritual awakening, as I understood at once that Allah had

taken away my child because it was not my property, rather my daughter belonged to the Maker of the Universe.

In my heart, I spoke to my daughter:

Oh, my daughter! Your god is most Merciful! Most Supreme! Most Just! Indeed, only His love is true and only His mercy is real and only His promises are eternal!

Oh, my daughter! You will find your father praying to his Allah and saving himself and all others around him from disobeying the most powerful, most merciful and most truthful God!

Oh, my daughter! I had loved you and I had lost you and my life had no worth after you were gone!

Oh, my daughter! It was not out of spite but rather a searing pain which wrecked my heart and tore my soul away and made me most angry at the decree of my Lord and caused me to rebel against him by drinking excessive wine in my foolishness! It was my lord who sent you to me to become my daughter, and made me your father! It was my Allah, the owner of the universe, Who made me love you and made you love me, and when He took you away, He merely took away what was His from the beginning!

But, oh, if man knew what waves of grief wrecked my heart! If they discerned what broke my soul and made me angry at my Lord and caused me to become a vile sinner as I waged a war against my Merciful Allah who only wanted to unite us in heaven and make me feel the pain of the hereafter so I may be encouraged to abandon my sinful ways! Therefore, I let go off my sinful ways and turned to my Lord in repentance and hope to save all those whose children are suffering!

The man went on speaking from the pulpit, explaining the greatness of Allah: "Allah created us from no raw materials, or any raw substance. There was no substance which Allah required to begin the creation of man or animals. Allah created from nothingness. The first human being was created from nothingness. Everything belongs to Allah. Everything is dependent on the Power of One Allah. Every cell in our body, every atom in the universe, is existing solely on the power of Allah. We must have faith that whatever happens, happens in the order of Allah."

Raising his voice, the pious speaker continued:

"The Koran (Final Testament) again and again, calls out, reminding us that this life in the world is a test: Verily! We have made that which is on earth as an adornment for it, in order that We may test them as to which of them are best in deeds. And Allah says, your sustenance, your wealth, your money, is not coming through your efforts, or your shops or your degrees. Your sustenance is coming to you from the heavens of Allah, according to the decree of Allah. By the Lord, Allah does not need you to lie, Allah does not need you to cheat, Allah does not need you deceive, and Allah does not need you to resort to illegal means to earn your money, and when the Caller of prayer calls out, and he announces, Allah is the Greatest, then he tries to convey the message that who else is there greater than Allah? No one! Allah alone is your goal. There are no partners to Him. Allah alone is your direction! Then the thought might occur that how can I please that Allah? How can I go

to path of my Allah? What is the road to my Allah? What is medium to my Allah? It is through the path of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah! Allah Himself announced that if they open every door, if they come down from every road, I will never grant them my Closeness, and I will never grant them entry to my Court, except that they do not come upon your road, O Muhammad. When the caller to prayer announces -come to prayer, twice, the first time, he calls on behalf of the One Allah, and the second time, he announces the call on behalf of the Last Messenger, announcing your prophet is also calling you, and it can be proven that in his last breath, the final Messenger continued repeating the importance of salaah. Then the Caller proceeds to call Believers to success. Again, the call assures us that coming to prayer is the real success, this is honor, this is dignity, but in this day, many people say, if I leave this business, or if I leave this shop, or if I leave this degree, then my sustenance will get affected. That is why it is said if at the height of arrogance, a laborer is paid monthly wages, and his employer calls him to office, once or twice or thrice, and if he does not reply to the calls or react to the summons, then the employer will immediately fire him, and swear on his mother and father and make him a subject of his wrath. However, did we consider how many times the Caller of prayers announced the prayer times? For twenty years, some people heard the Call and it fell on deaf ears. Thirty-six thousand five hundred times his Allah had called him, thirty-six thousand five hundred times that call had fallen onto deaf ears! Allah tells us come to Mosque, come to prayer, come to success! That is why the Prophet, one prayer, if it is not prayed on time, and even if it made up at a later time, then for missing it on its appointed time, if Allah does not forgive you, if Allah does not forgive you, then he will be put into the prison of the afterlife for 28 million years. The religious speaker exclaimed with renewed vigor:

"A day is coming! A day coming! The Final Testament is calling out! Day! A day is coming on this earth, that pure woman whose not a hair was ever seen by a strange man, and that woman who danced on the stage, both will be gathered together and walk together; on this earth, the person who guarded his livelihood from illicit money, and the person who usurped wealth unjustly will walk together; on this earth, that ear which never listened to music and which ear was filled with the recitation of the Final Testament, and that ear which listened to revelry, they walk together; on this earth, that person who sold the knowledge of Religion in exchange for wealth, and the person who gave his life for the knowledge of Religion walk together; and in this earth, the one who was proud and arrogant and looked down upon others, and the one who was humble and pure, they walk together; and in this earth, the one who lowers his gaze, and the one who raises his gaze and looks at the unlawful, they walk together! What a day is coming, when there will be differentiation! An announcement will be made, today the sinners must move to one side. No one will be able to hide! No one will be able to run! No one will be able to oppose! No one will be left out! Each one, one by one, without exception, will be resurrected, in such condition as you were born: bare feet, bare headed, completely naked! No one will want to know another person on that Day! Even your close friend will not look to the needs of his close friend. Every human relationship will break down! That mother who carried you for nine months, and cried out with pain when she delivered you, she also will say you are not my son. That father will not want to know you, who toiled hours

for your comfort, he also will not want you! That husband will not want to know wife, and that wife will not want to know the husband. And that Day is coming! Angels will be lined up in rows, and the scale of Justice will be raised up, and Paradise will be brought Hellfire will be brought, and you may be thinking that Day is perhaps far away, and that is why you are in enjoyment, and that is why you are in revelry, but Allah says: No, no! The day is very near! The trumpet is already at the mouth. It is about to be blown! That day is very, very near! That day... I am sitting on this pulpit, I am speaking to you. You don't know what my object is. Maybe I want to be looked up as someone with a lot of knowledge. Maybe I am looking for your praises. Or maybe I am doing it for Allah's sake! You are listening. Why you are listening, I do not know! A Day is coming! A Day in coming when the Book of Deed will be thrown in front of you and you will be told, Read your own book of records . Look at your own past. Nothing can be erased no sin could be hidden . You make your own judgement. You decide for yourself. Did you please your Allah or did you displease your Allah? A Day when Justice cannot be bought! A Day when the oppressor cannot get the upper hand! A Day is coming of Justice! A Day when your mouths will be sealed and the fingers will start talking and the hands will start talking, and your thighs will start talking and your limbs will start talking and your toes will start talking, your body will start talking. You will tell your body: what is wrong with you? For your enjoyment, I have done all those wrong? Why have you become a witness against me? A Day when the person will be caught and the witness against him will be his own limbs. He will beseech his limbs: what is the matter with you? And the limbs will say: That Allah who causes everything else to speak, is compelling us to speak, and we cannot remain silent. Hereafter is coming! It is a reality! The life of this world, the object of this world, the goal of this world, the perspective of this world, is one thing only: Koran calls out: To test you. Allah is testing us! Allah has created the heavens and Allah has created the earth. Allah has brought darkness into this world, and Allah had brought light into this world. One is the darkness of the night and one is the darkness of disbelief. One is the light of the suns and stars and the light of the day, and the other is the light of faith and piety and good deeds. Both are mentioned in the Koran, Allah has brought both things in this world in order to test. One is the darkness Allah brings about by the setting of the sun, and the other is darkness brought about the heart about Faith. By the rising of the sun of horizon of Faith on the heart, Allah causes darkness of ignorance to be dissipated from the heart. Allah is testing us! If Allah wanted, Allah could have made it daylight from now till the Day of Judgement, and the sun would not set. Tell them, O Muhammad, if we would have wanted, we would have made it daylight from now till the Last Day! Which force is going to cause the sun to set if Allah does not want it to set? Allah could have made it Light till the end of times! Allah could have given everyone the light of Faith and piety, and there would be no darkness if Allah wanted. But Allah does as He Wills. What is the meaning of the rising up and the decline of this world? What is the meaning behind the conditions and circumstances of this world? Allah is testing us! The Right side has power. The wrong side has some power. Allah has given the devil power also. On the same Day, when Adam came in to this world, it was the same Day that the devil came into this world. The first day, Truth came into this world, and that same day, Falsehood came into this world. The Road is there. Either

go in the road of Truth, and become the companion of Truth. Or go into the left and become a companion of the Falsehood. With Truth, is Light. With Falsehood is Darkness. But know this: Light does not prosper on its own. And Darkness does not prosper on its own. Allah had made this world a place of cause and effect. For the light of day, the reason is the rising of the sun. For Light to prosper, the cause is preaching. And for darkness to prosper in this world, the cause will be in preaching it. Both has marketing managers. This nation was made responsible to be the marketing managers of Truth and to preach the Truth. Truth was spread through the preaching of Truth. Darkness was spread through the preaching of Darkness. The devil swore an oath: I will come from the right, I will come from the left, I will come from the front, from the back, from above and from below, and I take them towards Your disobedience. Devil had his agents who are preaching evil, and there are those pious ones who are spreading the Truth, and the light of Truth will not be diminished on its own. When the preaching of Truth will cease, then only will the light of Truth diminish. About this nation, the followers of Prophet Muhammad, Allah has declared, We have made you a moderate nation, so that you may bear witness to humanity and the Messenger may bear witness to you. This nation was made the ambassador of the Religion of Peace. You are the ambassadors of Allah, and the ambassador of the Prophet! Darkness is spreading for one reason only, and that is because it is being propagated. You are the representative of Allah on this earth, and you must preach with sincerity."

The speaker's passionate and heartfelt words reverberated through the prayer hall.

My reliance on the darkness of night was absolute, and I confided my sorrow to the solitude of my grief. I was suffering from a hysteric agitation but hearing these word made me feel some peace and comfort. What was it like to travel alone through life's dark wilderness and face the torrent of sorrow alone? I was a weary traveler, heading to the home of my Lord, where I hoped to unite with my deceased daughter. The burden and distress in my heart became bearable only after I beseeched to my Lord.

Oh, my Lord! I have loved You today for You have shown me what betide my child! My Allah! You have shown me Your mercy and You have shown me Your love!

Oh, Eternally Merciful, Most Forgiving God and Maker of my daughter and me! Put peace in the heart of those fathers and and mothers who had lost their child! Give them rest and joy an reunite them with their children in heaven! I am alive, and my daughter is dead, and for this, I must mourn. But, O Allah, help me bear this grief and save me from future misery

Oh, Lord of the heavens and sustainer of the two worlds! Accept my tear-stained repentance and the bloodshot tears of my eyes which seek nothing but Your forgiveness and deserves naught but punishment from You!

I traversed known roads and crossed untrodden paths, but never did I find the smallest relief for my grief. I looked on to the dark and dreary world with tears streaming from my bereaved eyes, and I wondered how I, a pathetic sinner, would fare in the Day of Judgement, and I contemplated on how I

would bear the distress of the journey to the hereafter? These thoughts deluged my mind, as I prayed to my God.

Oh, to the heavens that travels through the galaxy and the trillion stars that adore the sphere between the limitless universe under the supervision of a limitlessly powerful God! Oh, Allah, the King of all kings! Had any sin of mine earned Your displeasure? Then tear it from my heart and let me be grateful to You and repent to You!

Oh, Allah! Let me have the chance and blessing to be amongst the ones whom You chose over billions of Your bondsmen to worship You and pray to You and call out Your name!

Oh, the most merciful Allah! You had given me grief to bear and this had broken my heart with a pain that was beyond what pain can be imagined or felt by any man on earth! You had taken away the soul of my angelic daughter, who was the blood of my heart, the soul of my life and you had made me bury her and abandon her to the cold, dark and lonely graveyard amongst the dead and the old!

I was wealthy from infancy, and noble by birth, and the riches I possessed were but mines to dispense, for I did not earn this wealth by fraud or stealth, nor did I gain my esteem by treason or transgression. But I saw that this wealth and fame brought me no joy. My beauty brought me no happiness. The lavish praises from neighbors, and undying attention from youths could not give me a purpose in life.

My only child was dead and gone, and my world was empty and I was alone! Oh, Allah! You know I have no one but You! Verily, man is deficient of intellect, and O how cannot they know that they do not have anyone but You. My Allah! I cried in my heart. Surely You must understand me! Because You know what volumes of pain sears at my heart and how my sorrow had ambushed my defense! Verily, only You know the innermost feelings of my heart! My Lord, You know I do not seek to sin against You in anger nor do I resent Your Truth, and I do not drink wine to rebel against Your commands, but seek alcohol as a means to forget the pain that made my mind wrought with grief! I hope to blot out vestiges of this sadness!

The cluster leafage surrounded the grassy meadow whirled with the winter wind. The field was empty, and not a soul could be seen for as far as my eyes could see, and I momentarily rejoiced for this, because I had once more become overcome by a bout of maddening grief, and the merest thought of my deceased child made angry tears rush to my eyes. The blades of grass swayed as though on its own motion, and I wept and spoke to my Lord:

Oh, my Allah! Forgiveness is what I only want from You, yet You and I know that of the all the mortals who tread upon Your earth, I least deserve Your clemency or pardon!

Oh, had I never been born and had I never felt these pains that wreck my soul away!

Let my prayers be heard by You, O Allah, and turn not away my last prayers for I have no one but You to implore to and none save You to beckon to my plea! My follies are great, but what I have done out of my heartache and pain shall not be of any consequence to the Merciful Lord who controls the trillions of

galaxies and the billions of stars! I am but a speck of clay in Your universe, so grant me Your Heaven!

My hearts is Yours, O my Allah! It has always been Yours and never belonged to anyone but You! Take my humble repentance and try and forgive this sinner who has no one but you!

Let us not misguide others nor be misguided ourselves!

Oh, how I wished Death would come in the form of a mystical wind that would carry me over land and ocean, and lay me gently down beside my daughter? But no; there was no respite to my sorrow, and no reprieve was forthcoming from the glaring skies. Had any mortal, me besides, tasted my cup of sorrow? I glanced morosely at the high ground beyond my house, and in the moonlight, I could feel the proud forest-trees looking on without compassion. What lifeless things they were, devoid of human feelings and compassion! As I watched, sweeping sharp winds of an upcoming storm whipped the tree trunks into submission, and tore the gold and crimson leaves away to an unknown landscape beyond these hills. I looked on. The once proud trees had rested their boughs on the leaves-strewn ground, humbled and defeated. The forest convulsed beneath the power of the wind, but I had no power to forget my grief. With each gust of gale, my sorrow increased in my chest like a rising well. I wept, and prayed to my Allah, with the following words:

Oh, the Lord of my heart! Let us all reunite with our family members who are in Your heaven!

Have I anyone but You, O my Allah, that I can ask to give me anything? Oh, the merciful of the Most Merciful! You have shown mercy on one who least deserves Your mercy or forgiveness but implores you with the last hope left in his heart!

The pouring rain blotted out the streams of tears that flowed from my reddened eyes. I welcomed the clouds of thunder that swirled overhead, for they appeared to grieve my Fatimah along with me. The throbbing pain in my heart was more than I could bear and I prayed to Allah to grant me a swift death and rejoin me with my child, who now resided in the land of the dead.

Oh, thundering clouds and roaring winds! Oh, the blazing fires around us! What supreme power does your Creator hold? Oh, benign skies! Will not my Maker find me fit to deserve his forgiveness?

Can you not feel the tremors in my heart, O callous wind, when you blow incessant gale against my weeping eyes?

O glaring sunlight, don't you see the tears staining my pale cheeks?

Oh, birds of distant skies! Can you not hear my wailings that shake even the mountain tops at each break of dawn? When I recall the grief that wrecked my life, do you then, O gentle dove, sing unto me a tune of sorrow?

The wild and cold rain poured on, and as the wind roughened, I sobbed and sobbed, aimlessly moving along a pathless way, hoping to walk with my reverie, until all human thoughts were erased from my mind and I continued to beseech to my Lord for Mercy.

Oh, the calm ground that stays steadfast for man to tread upon! Do you not see the fear that shakes every fiber of my being? Can you discern when it makes me tremble and fall as I walk, as frightful thoughts about my future and the hopelessness of this broken world beset me?

Bear witness, oh stars and skies, and heavens and fire and wind! Know that I had grieved and repented! Bear witness to your Lord and implore Him to forgive me and grant me another chance to worship Him and spend the rest of however many days of my life I have remaining in my Maker's remembrance and righteousness!

Who shall beseech pardon for me? Oh, who possesses the power to worship the Almighty? None can ever pray to the Supreme Creator without His divine permission!

Oh, Allah, against whom I had sinned! Let not a day descend upon which You are angry with me! Oh, I would die a thousand times, and suffer in a thousand ways rather than anger you again! For You are an honorable Lord, and I know I must become honorable in order to be loved by You! O let me never earn Your displeasure! Seize my life away from this world if You see me going astray!

Let not a day enter into my life in which Your pleasure will be changed into anger toward me!

Ode to man that lives a lie and sleeps at night thinking he will awake in the morning!

Ode to man that thinks he will eat and will not die before his food gets digested!

Ode man that sins and thinks his Lord will not seek from him an eternal recompense!

A gray mist covered the city as I walked aimlessly over the grassy hills, trying to forget the miserable and sad memories from my head, weeping like a tortured wounded animal. How can men live a doomed life where they indulge and injure, or despair and die?

Oh, Allah! Let me never be in Your displeasure even for the blinking of an eye!

My Allah! You had made me suffer, but I knew not it was because of my sins, and for this, I had hated You! My Lord, indeed, I had despised You and scorned all Your commandments! I rebelled against all Your scriptures, and I declared a war against you by drowning myself in sin and intoxicant in order to forget the pain you had caused me!

Oh, my own foolish heart! Had I known that my Lord had kept my child safe in heavens' arms, playing with other children of Paradise, where she was waiting to reunite with me, then I would have been most deeply repentant!

I wept and supplicated to my Lord thus: Oh, my Lord! Indeed, You love me! Upon uttering these words, I felt a rush of affection welling in my heart, and I succumbed to fresh tears and finally, when my weeping subsided, I continued to pray:

Oh, my Maker! Indeed, You love me and my daughter more than any human on earth or heaven can ever imagine!

Oh, what mystic healing have I found in Your love!

My Glorious Lord and King! My Comforter when all my heart and soul was broken and all my life was loveless and alone, and all my days were ripped away with bitter wailings of anguish!

Oh, my wild heart that have finally found love and solace in the worship of the Supreme and Benevolent Lord!

Oh, the one who finally began to obey the commandments of my Allah's scripture and words!

Oh, my Lord! I cried with renewed vigor. Hasten me away from this world so I could see You and love you like a desperate man for my heart is sour and pained from the suffering and heartbreak of this world!

Oh, my Allah! For You, I love! For You I die! For You I suffer and for You I try! O Maker of the heavens and the earth! My tears are for You! My laughter and joys are because of You! My pain I endure for it is part of Your plan to better me! And my end, I trust to You because You love me so ardently!

I raced up and down the river bank beside the town, and looked at the dark water swirling in the void, and the crystalline water glittered with the reflection of the moon. I gazed up to heaven and in the endless sky, I saw brilliant stars shining brightly. Millions of immensely huge stars adorned this sky, and the Lord of the Universe who created all these wonders chose to guide me unto His True path, although of all the mortals beneath these stars, I considered myself to be least worthy. When I was drowning in soul-wrenching grief, and did not think my daughter and I would ever be together again, I was guided to the Path of Light and Love and my Allah showed me the way to salvation. I hope other people who were suffering like me would also be saved from eternal damnation.

Oh, mankind! Come to your Allah and wage no more war against the only God who loves you!

Oh, men and women who walk upon the earth! Do not you know the love your Lord has for you?

Do you not know about the blessings your Lord has reserved for you? Yet, you sin against Him! Yet, you disobey Him! Yet, you hurt the feelings of your Mighty and Gracious Maker! Why, O people, why are you still beguiled?

With a forlorn mind, and a heart swelling with anticipation, I marched purposefully over the grassy hill that was gleaming from the clear sunlight that streamed from the glassy blue sky. I saw the roses and tulips drooping on the ground and suddenly the realization of how vast the world is dawned upon me, and I saw myself as the little insignificant thing which crawled upon this earth, but had no worth or value to anyone who lived. But despite my unworthiness, my Lord had guided me, and shown me the right path. I breathed again, thinking that my life was not in vain, and in the next world, I would see my beloved daughter again! But oh, the terrible possibility entered my mind for a fraction of a second, and I wondered how I would have lived if my Allah had not guided me? I was a lost soul, wandering in the steeps of

death and despair, drowning in wine and spirits, not knowing or caring about prayers and fasting. Had I died in that condition, surely, I would have been destroyed!

Now, I wished all the people in this town could know about the generosity of my Allah, the Most merciful!

In a loud voice, I shouted:

Oh, mankind! What has come over you! Are you blind with indignant parties and boisterous dances or have you become blinded with hate and angered by deception of this world?

Oh, people! Are you so mad with jealousy or hopeless with self loathe that you deny your Lord? Why do you shut your eyes and your hearts from Allah's love and continue to hate Him and deny Him while chasing after the fickle things and striving to please men and women who hate and despise you and will never help you especially in time of dire needs?

The throbbing pain in my heart did not cease, and I was afraid I would die in the agony of my woes. The storm of grief that raged in my body only became stronger, and I wondered if I would dissolve in the sadness of losing my darling daughter. But I turned my face to the star-decked skies and cried out: Oh, Benevolent Giver of life and death! Allow me a portion of Your pity and though undeserving as I am, grant me entry into Your paradise!

How beautiful was the power of imagination that for the tiniest moment, let me think myself free of despair. Oh, how the vestiges of my imaginary happiness sunk me into a stupor of denial and I awoke, repeating the name of my child, believing she is still alive and well!

Oh, my Fatimah, though alone you lie,

Beneath these bed of roses,

I cannot believe you could die,

And my weeping never ceases!

The angels shading you here,

Hovering over my thoughts today,

Seeks the reason for my despair,

And wipes my tears away!

I saw within the thoughts of my head,

Your sight entering into my view.

And they raised you from the dead,

And you lived and oh, it was true!

This was real, and not a mere art!

My Fatimah was returned to me!

Lo! I clasped her to my heart,

And oh, what joy and cheers for me!

With tears of love, I clasped her near,

Close to my distressed heart,

Why do you weep, O father dear?

What grief you store in this heart?

My Fatimah was alive and moved!

I thought she in softness said:

Dearest father! You are loved,

Even from the land of the Dead!

**I wept but my daughter said:
Do not grieve- for my God is kind!
I woke, and found my Fatimah gone
But only my trail of tears behind!
And when I awoke from sleep again,
I searched for my child, pained and anguished!
Feeling renewed hopes, I looked in vain-
I woke but O my Fatimah had vanished!**

Upon waking from my dazed state, I resolved to adopt the path to repentance and reformation.

Saying these lines, I began to pray to my Allah once again.

Oh, my daughter! You were a blessing to me from my Allah! He gifted you unto me and he took you away! Know that He will reunite us when I am worthy of you and as sinless as you are, so we can stay together near the Heaven on our Lord with love and happiness for all eternity!

Oh, the heavens that is brightened with planets and upon which stars dance and glow in their respective galaxies! Do you know how great is your Maker who despite being so powerful and mighty still soothes the heart of an unworthy sinner like me?

Oh, the sun that burn into midday! And O evening stars that dwarf our sun with their size and sheen! Oh, the planets that rotate around the sister stars! Do you know how merciful your Controller and Maker is? Have you seen how supreme and sublime my Allah is that He has deemed it fitting to mend the broken pieced of a sinner's heart like me?

Oh, the stars that dazzle the darkest skies! And O winds that blow away the glitter of the day! O bright and gentle planets that rove aimlessly about the Milky Way! Harken! I declare to you the greatness of your Lord!

Bemoaning my intricate imperfectness, I addressed my Lord thus: Art Thou not the Almighty Lord and Maker of the universe, so as to heal my broken heart and remove all the distress of my soul by Thy abundant Grace!

As though from heavens, a burst of calm rain began to pour over my bowed head, and with each drop of rain, my sorrow lessened and I could muster the strength to breathe again.

Then, I surveyed the emerald grasses and dancing flowers around me, and spoke with assurance.

Oh, the living and the dead! Have you known how merciful is your Creator?

Oh, let the world be gone to dust, and the earth be shattered to pieces, or the mountains be reduced to powder, or suns expire to infinity or my body dies or shrivels away! But never shall I disobey my Lord!

Let the world abscond, and its inhabitants reject me, and let the people revile me and the earthly fortunes rebel against me, but never shall I disobey the commandments of my most Merciful Lord!

How can I not cherish the love and mercy of my Allah, when man had hated me for my sinful past and the vile earth had accosted me for my imperfections, and the people hid and shied away from me due to my drunken state, but my Lord chose to forgive me and give me another chance at salvation!?

Why then should I care about the love or hate of men when my Lord had loved me more than my family, friends and even parents? Why should the praise or criticism of man matter to me when Allah alone has promised to save me?

What can a mortal man on earth ever do to save me or grant me eternal bliss that I should care about their acceptance, seek their friendship or ponder over their love or hate?

Can all the people of this mankind gather together and bring my daughter back to me?

Will the powers of all humans be sufficient to bring me peace and happiness?

Can they save me from death? Will these men and women be able to decide my Heaven or Hell for me? O why then should I care about their friendship, companionship or their society!?

No! Indeed, my love is only for those who are grateful enough to love their Creator and Maker! For only the righteous ones shall assist me in paving the path to eternal salvation!

Oh, my Allah! No devotee amongst the mankind can be more sincere in his penitence than I am in mine. I am the weakest of Your creation, and yet I seek from You eternal bliss and forgiveness!

Oh, mankind! Open your eyes, calm your heart and humble your pride and strive to see with the eyes of your heart how your Lord loves you!

I gazed forlornly at the beclouded sky and saw faint rays of golden sunlight peeking out. Perhaps there was hope for me. Maybe, my Lord will shower a rain of comfort on my heart. With renewed hope, I pledged myself to serve Allah with the following words:

Oh, merciful Allah! This heart that I carry is Yours! And I am Yours to take, Yours to guide, Yours to punish or reward!

A Tale of Two Saints

It was the post-civilization period of ancient Arabia, during the early period of 800 A.D. when wise men held territorial rights to expanses around the Mediterranean Sea.

Ascension after accession of just rulers dominated the region while military anarchy was unheard of along the continental shelf.

The Hejaz was a principate with Arabia as the metropole of its provinces, and Basra as a key city, known far and wide as the epitome of human civility and eminence.

The city of Basra was populated with eager knowledge enthusiasts and semi-obscure sages and scholars who were well aware how the advent of Islam had conventionally marked the beginning of classical antiquity civilization and success.

During this time, in the ripe year of 800 A.D, there lived two old men and retired citizens in the city.

One particular man was nearing the age of ninety years and he lived in the periphery of the sensational city of Basra.

As it happened, only miles away, directly across the city, lived another sage of similar manners and age. It was at the distance of ten miles from his humble abode, on the edge of a rugged cliff whose sides were steep, and encumbered with stony asperities, lived the other pious man engaged in religious exercises, but his faith had habituated him to practice a different mode of worship.

Although both men knew each other, they were adherents of differing faiths. They followed a different religion and called upon a separate deity, but one thing united the men- and made them akin to kindred spirit: they were devoted to their Lord.

They believed in different tenets, and they worshipped different gods and they followed different laws in the entirety of their life.

One man was known to be very pious and the greatest religious scholar in the whole country.

Throughout the kingdom, people from far and near would come to him to resolve their issues by his wisdom, blessings, or seek comfort in the intermediary of religious laws. This man acted most justly and most honorably towards all those who came to him and was benevolent towards all those people of the kingdom.

Scores of poor, destitute and needy men and women along with innumerable orphans and widows would knock on his door seeking advice and assistance, and he would devote his time in helping them. For years, this man spent his days and his nights worshiping God and helping all those around him. In addition to being a worshipper of Allah (*Allah, Arabic Allāh ("God"), the one and only God in Islam-Etymologically, the name Allah is a contraction of the Arabic al-Ilāh, "the God."* The name's origin can be traced to the earliest Semitic writings in which the word for god was *il, el, or eloah, the latter two used in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Allah is the standard Arabic word for God and is used by Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews as well as by Muslims.*)

This pious man was also the most learned and religious man in the city, with a brilliant mind that was filled with wisdom of religious knowledge that were gleaned ceremoniously from scriptural texts. This pious man possessed the wisdom of philosophy and the wisdom of age.

Regardless of race or creed, people from all walks of life would seek his company whenever they faced hardship, and they begged him to pray for them, and miraculously, whenever he prayed for them, the day's sun would not even descend but all their problems would be resolved.

This was the most honorable man of Basra, who all the people trusted, regardless of their faith or their Creed, irrespective of their race or class or their social standing.

The pious man acted justly towards everyone regardless of their power and their wealth.

Even when the most intelligent ones amongst them could not resolve an issue, the people of the city had no doubt that this pious man was going to be able to solve all parity, for no one had any doubt about the piety, goodness and unwavering faith of the man.

They often witnessed how he spent all his nights crying to Allah so profusely, that after the night's close, his long auspicious beard would become soaked with his tears.

This man was utterly noble and sinless, for he spent all his life from his youth to his old age in worshiping Allah throughout the night, and praying and kneeling in front of Allah's altar till sunrise, and fasting by abstaining from food and water throughout the days, and yet he considered himself the most unworthy of Allah's mercy. Verily, this pious man thought himself to be the most sinful of the sinners, for occasionally, his mind encountered fleeting thoughts of momentary joy and pride of being able to live an ascetic life, and for this, the man was doubly grieved, and blamed himself most severely for his guarded flaws.

He was zealously punctual in the offices of prayer, and in the performance of good deeds.

There were perhaps only few men in Basra, or indeed in the entire world, who were equally sincere in their faith, or were as sparing in their censures and restrictions, as this devout pious man.

Contemplating his unworthiness to himself, the man would often weep so ardently in the darkest hours of the night, that even the neighbors and beggars of the street would pity him.

A few sympathetic passersby would cry out: "Oh, pious man! Cease your weeping, for we are certain that your Allah has forgiven you. Indeed, we have known you since days of yore, and we have seen your sinless habits and long episodes of devout worship and charity. For pity's sake, have mercy on your soul, and do not destroy yourself by being inundated in volleys of bitter tears!" When he heard these words, the man would break into fits of tears. Amidst torrents of helpless tears, he would retort, "Oh, how can you say this for certain? How do you know that my Allah loves me? How, indeed, how can you know if He does not dislike me or that He does not hate me? Oh, gullible man! How do you know that my heart is pure enough to dwell in the obeisance of the most pure and sublime Allah?"

And with these words, the man retreated to his abode near the city's edge, which was bounded by a rising scene of fields and orchards, but little could interest or distract him. The farthest verge of this precipice was miles above the flowing river. The view before him consisted of a transparent current, rippling majestically between deserts and sandy channels.

The edifice of his small abode was slight and airy and he remained engrossed in worship day and night.

One night, the man wept so desperately that the sound of his sobbing could be heard from afar. His crying became so pronounced, that an elderly woman who lived nearby approached his dwelling. She looked into his bare abode, and noticed the house had scant amenities, where the flooring was the rock, cleared of moss, and cautiously levelled, edged by a handful of rough columns, and embellished with nothing but an undulating dome.

The woman told him: "Oh, old man! I have seen you all my life! I bear witness that indeed you are sinless in the eyes of Allah. Give yourself some respite and some reprieve."

"Old woman!" He cried. "How can I rest when my future is not written plainly before me, and the uncertainty of my fate has not been shown in front of me? How do I rest when I do not know if I will go to heaven or hell after my abrupt death? How do I know if my prayers and my tears that are shed at night are accepted by Allah? Oh, how can I be certain that my imploring is not disliked by my Sublime Allah? How can I ever know if I am worthy enough in the eyes of my Lord, to enter his Abode in the pristine Heaven? Oh, woman! Thousands and millions of devotees cry and pray unto Allah, from the remotest corner of the universe. Say, how do I know Allah will deem my prayers worthy to even respond to? How do I know that Allah listens when a vile old creature like me calls unto Him?"

The elderly woman could not muster any reply to the emotional outburst and glanced helplessly around the plain room. She realized that this pious worshipper of Allah lived in a sparsely furnished room, which was notably without seats, tables, or ornament of any kind.

"Oh you worried soul!" Cried out the old woman, "Comfort yourself and sometimes spare yourself some leniency, for indeed your Creator is oft forgiving and most merciful!"

He continued to address her in a sorrowful tone. "Old woman, do not you know the sadness and the anxiety of the slaves of Allah who do not know their own position in the eyes of their lord? Oh, woman! If you could give me a

guarantee that I would be saved, and that I would go to heaven and that my Benevolent Creator Allah is pleased with me, then perhaps my tears would be subdued. But there's no surety in this life of what may happen in the hereafter. Verily, I have seen men who worshiped Allah all their life only to turn away from Allah in their final moments and they had become misguided and their end and death were in the greatest unsucccess and eternal downfall. Indeed, I too have seen men who worshiped idols and were disbelievers and pagans, all their life, but before they died, due to some hidden goodness in their hearts, their Allah had guided them and before seizing the last breath away from their souls, he allowed them to believe, and sent them to heaven! Oh, woman! What guarantee can you offer me that I will die with Faith in the One Allah? What surety can you give me that when I die, my Allah will be pleased with me pardon me and grant me admission into his paradise? Oh, what certainty can you proffer me that I will not die in the midst of an act of sin, or any action that may displease my Lord? Is there any guarantee that my last breath will leave my worthless body at a moment when I will be engrossed in an act of pious worship? What is the surety that I will not be agonized in my grave by the angels of torment? What surety can you give me that Allah will love me, forgive me and will have mercy on me after I pass away from this life onto the next life?

What surety can anyone give me that I will live for one more day? Is there any guarantee I will survive till the morn? Has my next breath been assured from heaven, or could I expire this very instant? Oh, pray tell, how can I live, how can I laugh, and how can I sleep and eat, not knowing the certainty of my future? Oh, old woman! Only the fools of this world can sin in harmony, as it is only the fools and the ungrateful people of this world who can laugh during the day and sleep leisurely at night and woefully remain forgetful about their lord and disregard the uncertainty of their own future and ignore the reality of death and the hereafter! Oh, old woman! We came here to this world only to prepare for the eternal Hereafter, but the devil had misguided most men and women through lust, through desires, through greed, through vengeance, through anger, through hatred, through wars, and through ego. Oh, woman! What surety can you give me that the devil will not misguide me like he had misguided so many learned and intelligent and wise men before me? Oh, woman! I have seen pious and honorable men who were once most beloved to Allah but became ensnared by the mischievous devil and from being the best men in the world, they turned into the worst men in the world. I have seen religious people become irreligious, and verily I have seen worshipers of Allah become worshipers of the devil. I have seen good people turn bad, and I have seen bad people turn good. What surety is there for me of receiving heavenly benevolence and what promises have I of an eternal Bliss that I would dare to rest in a peaceful slumber all night long or devour exotic cuisines throughout the day? Indeed, I have spent my entire life with the utterable fear of uncertainty in my heart, a terror which still grows within me. Oh, and verily it will linger in me till the day I die."

All those who knew the old man knew that for nearly the entire duration of the day, and into the lonely hours of the night, he remained in his small enclosure, unmolested by any human thought or sight, as he wept humbly and

prayed, and in this enclave, nothing was there to obstruct or postpone his devotion to his Lord.

Thus, with these words, the pious old man reproached the woman and continued to spend his life and time away, crying and begging Allah for forgiveness and seeking penance for all his human flaws and mistakes he ever made. For this man, this temporal life of this world was very insignificant and like a fleeting dream, because they knew the richest man who lived would end up in the same shallow grave to lay in an eternal rest beside a poor peasant and the only parameter that would be set by diligent angels would be that of piety, as Allah had promised in the Glorious Quran, declaring in the first verse of Chapter Hujuraat: 'Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you!'

These were men of wisdom. This old man was among the men of understanding and was one of the men of learning. They were not fools, nor were they silly or childish. They were not slaves of human lust and they were not slaves of their own desire. These religious men were not slave of greed or a slave of their own passion. They did not succumb to anger, hatred and unrighteous ego.

These pious figures chose to voluntarily secede from earthly commitments, and they resolutely obeyed all the commandments of Allah, but did not exact from the fellow city dwellers compliance with their example, for everything of value in this world, and all the indomitable kingdoms, and the treasure houses full of money and wealth and the power of the tyrants, and their fame and titles were meaningless and utterly counterfeit to them, because they knew nothing in this world was going to last forever. The unconquerable monarchs who sat high on their glass thrones did not intimidate them for the men of wisdom knew that these leaders were merely playing kings and queens in a cheap drama or play, and waged wars against one another to gain small conquests, but soon, their eyes will close forever, and they will realize that they had been actors playing a very temporary game, and now the Act was over and they would be returned to the dust, covered with cheap dirt, lying alone in a dark cold grave. Those indulgent leaders and monarchs had believed that the roles they were acting were real, and they thought themselves to be powerful and influential, but only after the advent of death, those mighty kings understood that they were nothing but an actor with a mask of monarch. Only after death will man understand that the power of this world was temporary and worthless. The fleeting moments of power or luxury they experienced in this world was just to play and act for a short period of time, which would be unceremoniously taken away and nothing but the dust would remain. The ashes of past mighty empires lay in darkness, as their emperors lay forgotten in narrow and silent tombs. The wind of death swept over them fiercely and did not leave behind even a remnant of their glory. Only dust and ashes remained.

This pious man did not allow himself to get fooled by the temporariness of this world and by the transient power and crumbling Kingdoms of the world and the abominable lust of the impermanent world. He focused on the everlasting, eternal hereafter, which was the only real life for which he came to this world to prepare for.

This pious man's name was Hassan. He was extremely handsome during his youth but rather than indulging in the pursuit of wealth and lust, he spent his entire life in devotion to one God and prayers. Up till the ripe old age of ninety, this old man continued to resolutely worship the One Allah of Abraham.

He had earned a special status among the tiers of dervishes because he was blessed with the comradeship of 120 companions of the Blessed Prophet Muhammad (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Despite his unique status, Hassan was God-fearing man who was always overwhelmed with the fear of death. So much did he grieve about his uncertain future that from the time of his youth, Hassan pledged to himself that he would ignore the desires and luxuries of this world and prepare only for the next world, and thereafter, he remained engrossed in worship and never again laughed - until death overtook him at an old age. Every minute of his entire life, he constantly stayed in a state of utmost piety and purification in his solitary abode. The loneliness of his dwelling prevented him from being distracted during long hours of kneeling and praying. He considered this to be a temple of his Deity and did not seek the company of any established congregation to fulfill his obeisance to Allah.

Better known to his city-people as Hassan of Basra, he roamed in the loneliness of the desert and wept profusely to his Allah, and sought the intercession of the messenger of Allah and His prophets in the Hereafter.

Once, a man asked Hassan what he thought about some people who were criticizing him and finding faults with his statements.

To this, Hassan of Basra replied with humility. "I find myself full of fault," said he. "While I am searching for divine proximity, I cherish the desire for paradise. but both these attitudes are contradictory. Furthermore, I do not hope to be immune from the criticism of people. Not even Merciful Allah, not even the parents of saints, not the Prophets, not the Angels, and not the heaven nor hell, nor anyone in the universe has been spared by the tongue of people."

The sage Hassan knew that his work of righteousness and mercy was a priceless endeavor in which the fruits of the pious labor in this world would be in the care of the Almighty without doubt, who in His own good time, would bring forth rewards greater than a hundred-fold to all those who persevered. These religious saints were aware that the very best of people sometimes are apt to become discouraged by the uncertainty of the hereafter, but those who had the very great privilege to be born of pious parents, and reared in Faith and Honor, would remain steadfast in the paths of piety and virtue. But, notwithstanding all their prayers, and all their cares, for the greatest part of his life, Hassan feared that he did not deserve the magnanimity of the Almighty Allah. He knew he had been endowed with such generosity and mercy from his Lord, that scarcely a day has passed in his life without him receiving some special mercy at the hand of his Deity. Now, Hassan wept all night long and sought forgiveness for his seeming ingratitude and thanked the Mighty Creator for pouring bountiful blessings on his undeserving soul. Contemplating on the boundless mercy of Allah, Hassan remained engrossed

in constant and earnest prayers. He, as did the other wise men, knew that the human heart often seeks to deceive the worshipper, and oftentimes, religious and learned men suffered from weakness of the flesh or unrequited pride, and immediately suffered the consequences of being led captive at the will of the devil and became responsible for the commission of a crime which had brought punishment and infamy upon their unfortunate souls, and filled the rest of their earthly days with misery and disgrace.

Often, Hassan of Basra would exhort those around him to obey the one Allah, and called upon men and women to beseech Allah's mercy and forgiveness. One day, some people approached Hassan and told him that those who embark on preaching people towards goodness should become morally purified themselves first, and become sinless themselves first. To this reproach, Hassan replied. "The devil most ardently desires that the door of commanding righteousness and prohibiting evil be closed forever." With these words, he continued in his mission to become pious and enjoin goodness.

Once, there was a severe drought in Iraq, and the people of Basra were starving. Children wailed due to excessive hunger, as the dry winds of coarse summer swirled around their stick-thin frames, shoving the arid dust into their sunken faces.

The drought was so severe and the famine was so menacing, that thousands and thousands of cattle died and the hapless residents were starving and dying from thirst, as not a drop of rain descended upon them for years. The people had become restless and impatient. Children would cry and the mothers would weep in despair. There were no crops available in the entire country and even the stray animals were dying out of thirst and hunger. The people of Iraq gathered together and joined arms in the midst of a field. Over two hundred-thousand men and women gathered on the outskirts of Basra and decided to seek advice from the elderly sage they knew as Hassan of Basra. They knew that this man was very pious and his prayers were accepted by Allah. However, when the people arrived at his doorstep and entreated him to climb atop a mountain and supplicate the Heavens for rain, Hassan begged to be excused and remarked, "If you wish for rain, then expel me from this country."

He said this due to his extreme humility which caused him to believe that in all of Basra, none was more sinful and unworthy than himself. Although he was the most pious man in the continent, his humble demeanor made him believe he was the cause of the drought. Such was the level of humility in his heart that he considered himself to be sinful.

One afternoon, Hassan of Basra accompanied a funeral procession and joined the burial ceremony.

After the deceased had been placed beneath the damp earth, Hassan wept profusely and addressed those around him. "Oh, people! Do you not know that the end of this world and the beginning of the hereafter starts from this grave?

Why then do you love a world and cherish a life whose end is in the grave?

Oh, why do you love a world whose final destination is in a narrow, dark dusty grave?

Why do you not fear the eternal realm of the hereafter, the advent of which begins in the grave?

Oh, look at this mound of dust and cold soil. Hence shall be your end and your beginning.

An ordinary traveler once came to his abode and begged him for some advice. Hassan of Basra gave him three advices:

"One. Never enter into companionship with kings and rulers.

Two. Never reveal your secrets and your sins to anyone.

Three. Never listen to music.

The end result of all three of these acts ends most dangerously."

One day a man approached Hassan and asked him what causes the corruption of the people? To this, Hassan of Basra simply replied, "It is in the death of the heart."

The man asked, "What is the death of the heart?"

The pious man of Basra responded. "Having love of the world in it."

In this very same sun-scorched city of Basra, there lived a fire worshiper. He lived under the blazing desert sun and worshiped the fire for seventy years of his life.

Now he was in his death throes.

Hassan of Basra received news of this fire worshiper's plight and heard that he was about to pass away, so he hurried to meet him.

The pious man went to the fire worshiper who hailed originally from Persia and was a follower of the Zoroastrian religion, and exhorted him to believe in the One God of Abraham.

Hassan said, "Oh, you fire worshiper! Do not leave this world without worshiping your Lord. Oh, you who have been worshiping the fire.

I beseech you not to leave this world without worshiping the One Allah of Adam and Abraham who created you, who fed you, who kept you safe, who kept you healthy, and gave you a long life?

Oh, fire worshiper ! Forget the animosity that you have with Allah and forget about the anger that you have towards Allah. Leave all the pain aside, and leave all the hurt aside, leave all the anger aside. Since death is so close, believe in the Allah that you know in your heart is real".

The fire worshiper's face had darkened upon hearing Hassan's words, and his face, which had turned black due to the years he spent facing the fire and worshiping it, now showed signs of displeasure.

The pious man again begged him to abandon fire worship and become a believer and a Muslim. "Accept the true faith of Allah and His Messenger," the religious man requested. "Perhaps Allah will have mercy on you."

The Zoroastrian fire worshiper listened to Hassan of Basra, and then replied. "There have been three things that turned me away from Islam and Muslim. Number one, according to the Muslims, the world is considered to be a very

evil temporary and irrelevant place, and yet, they all remain busy in its pursuit, and vie with one another to receive greater portions of earthly pleasures, whereas their religion teaches them to let go of this worldly pursuit of wealth and power. Clearly the pursuit of worldly luxuries goes against what their religion teaches them, because the Islamic religion teaches them to give charity and become pious, and practice abstinence and be god-fearing, and yet they do not follow the rules of their faith. Number two, Muslims believe that death is true and inevitable, but they do not make preparations for it. They do not do good deeds as much as they should do, had they really believed in the indisputable truth of it. Number three, Muslims claim the vision of Allah is always on them, and they insist God can see and hear everything they do or say, and still, they roam freely on Earth and constantly act in conflict to His commandments."

The pious man listened patiently to the grievances and then replied to the fire worshiper, "Your words are conclusive, and the three things you mentioned are indeed the ideal parameter which all faithful should follow, and it is a sign of those who recognize the truth. Verily, the true believer acts according to the three points you raised, but do tell me what have you gained by destroying your life in fire worship?"

The fire worshiper did not speak at once, so Hassan of Basra continued to reason with him.

"I believe in the One Allah, and testified in the unity and sovereignty of the Creator of the universe, and you who have worshiped the fire for seventy years- if we both were to die now, and fell into a pit of hellfire, the savage flame will burn both of us equally, not caring at all that you worshiped it for the entire duration of your life. However, my Allah has the power of preventing the fire from burning me just as he prevented the fire from burning the Prophet Abraham. This is because my Allah is the Lord of the fire and the creator of everything in between. The fire is an irrelevant creation of Allah, and has no power to burn. The water, likewise, has no power to extinguish the flame except with the Will of Allah. Nothing on Earth has any power except through the commandment of my Allah."

As he spoke, Hassan of Basra became emotional and in a desperate attempt to prove to the fire worshiper that the god of Abraham was real, and that the creator of the heavens and earth was the One All-Powerful Allah, the pious man went nearer to the dying pagan man and asked him once more to believe in Allah.

The fire worshiper from Persia was not a man to be easily coerced or motivated, so he challenged Hassan of Basra with these words. "What proof do you have that Your Allah is real?"

To this question, the pious man replied. "Oh, you intelligent fire worshiper! Did you never feel the presence of your creator? Have you not witnessed how many millions of times your lord had saved you? Did not you notice how many times in your life you had been almost run over by a driver or carriage? How many a times had you almost slipped and fell? How many a times had you gotten deathly sick? How many a times had you nearly fell to your annihilation or slipped from a cliff or choked on meals?"

How many a times had you been saved? Had it not been the One Allah, your and my Creator who saved you every single time? How can an intelligent man like you believe in coincidences after coincidence and still not believe in your own Creator?"

To this line of reasonings, the fire worshiper could not come up with any reply.

Hassan of Basra continued his admonishment: "Oh, you old man! How long will you deny your lord? How long will you fight him? How long will you be angry at him? Oh, my fellow countryman! Have you not despised your creator and your maker long enough? Have you not been denying Your Allah long enough? Have you no mercy and love for the god who created you and loved you more than all else? Oh, old man! Have you no love or gratefulness for the lord who fed you, clothed you and kept you in good health and let you attain old age?"

Upon hearing this, the Zoroastrian fire worshiper insisted that he does not wish to change his old ways and did not desire to relinquish his past beliefs.

The pious man then cried out! "Oh, my unfortunate neighbor! I beg you to let go off the anger and forget the vengeance and victimizations of your own personal anger! Oh, my good, fellow man! Your Allah can never hate you and it is only you who hate him! Your Maker can never hate you the way a mother cannot hate a child, because your Allah has created you. Yet, you have the audacity to deny him but know in your heart that your Allah will never stop loving you!"

The old fire worshiper then replied, "I spent my entire life in this place worshiping fire, for I believed it had power to heal and burn. My forefathers who I loved and respected also worshiped the fire you see before me."

**The pious man interrupted him and implored:
Oh old you old fire worshiper ! Come out from the religion of fire and come worship the God of Abraham who has honored humans as the best of creation with dignity and civilization and compassion and mercy!**

Oh old man come to the religion of the most honorable and mighty God whose faith has restored humanity to humans !

Tell me oh my old comrade! How can you prefer the religion of Zoroastrianism where they worship the fire and the Earth and make man lower than animals by dictating that all birth givers marry their own sons to destroy their honor and humanity and love and pure compassion! and how can you prefer a religion where they force humans to become worse than the vultures and degrades the dead by bathing them with urine and keeping the dead out for the vultures to eat and feast upon , when the God of Abraham honors every mother and sister and daughter and protects them from every sexual abuse and humiliation and allows women to cover their bodies and not be exposed like the canine dogs and how can you not forget the god of Abraham who honors the dead by letting their bodies be buried with prayers honorable and

bathes them with fresh clean water and adorns them with white shroud and perfume and salutes them with funeral prayers before they are sent to that eternal journey to God almighty!

Oh old man ! Forget about the hate which makes you hate and blame God and forget about the jealousy and actions of religious scholars, clerics and leaders which angers your ego and think of your own children and daughters when you accept the most righteous highest moraled Faith of the God of Abraham !

Think of your daughters and sons who no longer shall have to sexually serve their parents and grandparents by the laws of paganism and fire worshipping Zoroastrianism ! Think about how all women shall be honored and veiled and protected by marriage and not free to use and abuse for every man ! And think how God honored them and let them cover their bodies so no man could abuse them or think of them as animals who are not allowed to wear clothes!

Oh my old companion ! For once let mercy and compassion burn down the anger that makes your heart hate with such passion that you are willing to destroy your afterlife along with the future of your own children with dishonor only for your hate for a god who is never to blame for the actions of man! Hasan of Basra continued to beg to the fire worshipping man with the following arguments:

"Oh, old man!

Have you not spent your entire life loving fellow humans who will love you today and might hate you tomorrow? Yet you love them and put your anger on Allah by denying His existence? Tell me truly, have you never felt His presence in your heart at the middle of the night? Has not many, many of your wishes gotten accepted by the Benevolence of Allah? Was it not your Allah, your maker and owner who fulfilled most of your wishes? How then can you deny your Allah? How then could you hate Him? How then could you call yourself decent and merciful and hurt your Allah by denying him? Why, oh neighbor, why do you vent your frustration and anger on Allah instead of the humans who caused you pain?"

As Hassan of Basra entreated the fire worshiper to accept the true God of Abraham as his deity, the old man was steadily getting more and more ill, and the onlookers knew that the fire worshiper had only a handful of moments remaining on this earthly abode.

Wishing to convince the dying man of the truthfulness of Allah, Hassan of Basra then said: "Oh, my old friend! Indeed, you know this more than me that your Allah is true!

Oh, old man! Before you die, why keep any hate in your heart toward the One who made you? Have you not fought him long enough? Have you not hated your Creator long enough? Have you not vented your anger on Him long enough? Shall you let your anger and vengeance cause you to die in arrogance and ungrateful hatred towards the One being who loves you most sincerely? Will you leave this wretched world by loving the forgetful humans and denying the everlasting loving creator of your soul! Oh, my good man, torture your soul no more with the fire of your hate and anger towards your creator! Oh, old dying man! What use is there to torture your soul and force it to hate and deny the very thing that your heart knows is true?"

Suddenly, the fire worshiper cried out, "Oh, pious man! Why do you seek to convince me so desperately to become a believer of One Allah? What will you gain by this?"

"I am an old man, and almost as old as you." Hassan of Basra replied. "I am not a saint, but a sinner. A transgressor. I am selfish and impatient. I consider myself greedy like a child and silly like a youngster!" The pious man paused and spoke. "But I have seen my Allah's love and I have witnessed His sheer kindness! Oh, old man! I know my lord loves me! Oh, old man! I saw how my Allah fed me and saved me from calamities millions of times! Oh, old man! I was a weak youngster but when my lord saved me and fed me and clothed me, day by day, night by night, I witnessed His decrees and miracles and then my heart became soft! Oh, old man! Do you want me to number the times my lord granted my wishes? Do you want me to count the times He saved me from every kind of harm be they little or big! Oh, my old friend! My god loved me and I had loved him back! Oh, old man! When I was young and my heart had been broken by humans, it was my lord who gave me the strength to survive! Yes, it was my lord who saved me! It was my lord who gave me hope and love in a very dark and loveless world!"

Then lowering his voice slightly, the pious man murmured, "Forgive me, old fire worshiping man, if I appear to exhort you maddeningly and speak incoherently! It is only because I have known my god as he ought to be known!"

"Is this the reason why you have such zeal?" Questioned the fire worshiper.

The pious man replied at once. "How can you expect me to be calm when I tell you about my Allah! How can I not be encumbered with joy when talking of my Creator who saved me and loved me!

Oh, old man! One day you will realize that you have no one but God! No love but His love, and no loyalty but His loyalty."

"Does this Almighty god not frighten you?" Asked the fire worshiper. "Are you not afraid that your god will destroy you?"

Hassan of Basra responded kindly. "I know that if I would disobey him, my Allah would still save me! If I denied Him, my Allah would still feed me and clothe me! If I cursed Him, he would still keep his door of repentance open for me!

Then think of this- if and when I love Him, what rewards will that Allah store for me?

If I glorify His name, He won't let anything happen to me!

Verily I have faith.

No man can harm me because my Allah will protect me!

No animal can bite me because my Allah will save me!

No tsunami can drown me because my lord will save me.

No hurricane can move me because my Creator would save me!

No fire can burn me because my Allah, my Creator, my Maker, the god of Adam and Abraham will save me!" Saying these words, the pious man flew into

a fit of emotional sobbing and seeing the fire burn in front of him he plunged both his hands inside the raging burning fire.

To the horror and utter shock of everyone, the pious man's hand was not being burnt by the fire at all.

It took a while for himself to realize that the fire was not being able to burn him or touch his skin! He raised his face eagerly to the heavens and cried out: "Oh, Allah! Oh, my lord! Of Master of heavens! Will anyone love me more than You? Is there anyone more mightier and more merciful than you? Is there any being more true and real than You?"

Saying these words in amazement, Hassan of Basra held his hand deeper and deeper into the fire and the raging flames couldn't burn an inch of his skin. It nether burnt nor hurt nor heated his skin or flesh.

Seeing this miracle, the old fire worshiper became shocked and gazed thunderstruck at the pious religious man.

Now, he was even more desperate to not let the dying man take his last breath without worshiping and believing in the one true creator of the heavens and the Earth. So, in order to prove that the fire had no power, the religious man had uttered the name of Allah most ardently, and saying the name of Allah, he had plunged his into the blazing fireplace.

Gazing earnestly at the heavens, Hassan of Basra kept his hand in the flame and then facing the heavens, he beseeched Allah for forgiveness and mercy. For a long time, he kept his hand in the fire and miraculously, the fiery flames did not have any effect on him, and nor did it scar or injure him in the least. Hassan then removed his hand from inside the fireplace and showed the fire worshiper that it was not remotely burnt. His skin was pristine smooth healthy and intact.

"You look surprised to see that the fire has not the power of affecting or harming me! Tell me truly, has the fire you worship as god, ever saved you from such calamity? Has your lord ever protected you like this? Only the One Allah has power over everything in the heavens and the earth." Hassan of Basra exclaimed. "At a young age, when my spirit was broken, and my body was in poor health, and I was living without a friend, my Allah graciously inclined the heart of all the city dwellers towards me, and guided my own heart into the paths of righteousness. I knew that this was an extraordinary interposition of Allah in my favor and in return, I loved and trusted my Allah. At times when I least expected it, and least deserved it, my Allah, in tender compassion, kept a watchful eye over me; proving to my wretched heart, that, no matter how unworthy I am, my Maker will always love and cherish me. The stronger your faith is in Allah, the more He will bring you closer to Him until He is with you everywhere you go and in everything you do!"

"Is your Allah real? Is he with you now?" Asked the fire worshiper.

The pious man replied: "Yes, verily, my god is real. My Allah is here with me now and forever!"

The fire has no power! The water has no power. The wind has no power. The earth has no power, and no creation has any power except for the power of my Allah! The universe has no power.

It is my Allah who is most powerful and most forgiving and most merciful! It is He who never stops loving never stops forgiving!"

Hassan of Basra was more than a mere saint; he was a devout preacher and now sought to save the old fire worshiper from the fire of hell. His agreeable manner impressed the dying man who agreed to listen to his advice. To the expostulations of his peers, the pious man seldom gave any reply or rebuke and only when he designed to be communicative, he spoke in small words and implored with utmost humility and now addressing the dying man, he called out:

"Oh, worshiper of fire! Will you not stop the worshipping of a creation of God and turn in submission to the god who created the fire? Then make a covenant with me and give me your hand and let me guide you back to the Allah who has been waiting for you all your life. That Allah who has been waiting for your return like a mother who waits a child's return with love and anticipation when the child gets lost. Hold my hand and be steadfast and hurt your Allah no more! Hold my hand and let Allah know that you love Him and accept Him as your Maker and as your Guardian and friend, and ascribe no partners unto Him."

Witnessing this miracle had an astounding effect on the fire worshiper, and his heart opened up to the light of true Faith. The aura of guidance had penetrated his heart as he finally witnessed the power of Allah first hand. With acquiescence, he finally believed in the god of Moses, the god of Abraham, the god of Adam, and the One Creator of the heavens and the Earth. Now, the fire worshiper was able to place his Faith on the All-Mighty Allah, and his heart has heart swelled up in recognition of his only creator. In his newly found ardor, the fire worshiper addressed Hassan in earnestness. "I have worshiped the fire for 70 years. What can I achieve in the last few moments that remains of my life?"

The pious man replied in one small sentence. "Become a Muslim, and become a believer in Allah, the one Creator of the universe."

Then the fire worshiper asked, "What will happen to me if I believe in Allah and if I believe in His prophets?"

Upon hearing this, the pious man replied at once. "Verily, Allah will forgive you, and erase away all your worst sins. Allah who is the creator of the heavens and the Earth will admit you into eternal Bliss and Paradise, a paradise which has a beginning but no end and in that eternal abode, you will be able to witness the reality of the Hereafter, and the truth of Allah's Justice, as you have now seen the power of Allah in front of your own eyes."

The fire worshiper said, "Since I am already dying, and having nothing more to lose or gain, what proof and what evidence do you have for me that will reassure me that my faith in Allah will be accepted? How can I know that

Allah will forgive me or accept me?" The pagan man heaved a great sigh, and exclaimed, "No! Indeed, I will not believe you and I will not believe in your Allah and His promise, for I have been a sinner all my life, and now how can your Allah be so great as to forgive all my past sins and accept me in His paradise when I worshiped a vile object like fire, and only accepted His Oneness in the last few seconds before my death."

Upon this, the pious man looked relieved. "Oh, old man!" He shouted joyfully at the former fire worshiper. "Do you know how happy it makes your Allah to see you love Him and turn back to him after such long years of heedlessness? No words inside books, no poetry in history, and no arts of the earth, can depict or visualize or put into words the love your lord will have for you! No man can understand and no human can comprehend how eagerly your Allah awaits your love and friendship!"

"But I am merely a sinner," cried the dying man, "for I have worshiped unpleasant things such as flames."

Hassan of Basra immediately answered. "Oh, that you would know what Allah says about sinners! My generous and kind Allah had announced: 'If the sinners knew of how much love and how much affection and compassion I had for them, their joy would be such that their hearts would burst in happiness and the limbs of their bodies would get separated and they would die from the sheer weight of happiness. And if this is the love I have in Me towards those who sin and disobey Me, then think about how much love an anticipation and affection do I have for those who obey and worship Me?'" Hearing these words, the old dying man felt as though a command had been laid upon him, which he had delayed to act on and now he felt as though the certain period of hesitation and reluctance had passed. He was no longer destined to worship fire and his devotion would now be dutifully assigned to the One Allah, the god of Abraham. And the old man only hoped that he would never have to face the consequence of his disobedience to Allah, and he hoped he would never have to endure the penalty of worshipping fire for seventy years. He expressed his fears to the pious man and said, "In this abode, removed from temptation, I am now able to review with bitter anguish the folly of my misspent life, and the years I spent in worshiping fire, believing it could save me. Now, I trust the Allah who agrees to graciously pardon and forgive, even the vilest of His creatures, will show mercy on my old soul."

Wallowing in self-premonition, the fire worshiper told the pious man to write a document of assurance for him. "Oh, religious man," he cried. "Dictate a message that will serve as a guarantee for me, and state clearly that if I embrace Islam, Allah will forgive me."

The pious man obliged, and wrote the document stating that the dying man will be redeemed if he accepted Allah as his Lord and Islam as his religion, and then he presented it to the fire worshiper. The fire worshiper took the document in his hand and glanced at it serenely, but suddenly he exclaimed, "This is not enough! I must be certain this paper will suffice for my eternal salvation. Hence, take it back and have all the pious

saints of Basra and Iraq endorse it with their signatures. Make them all sign under the document as a proof and witness that when I die, Allah will forgive me and the Allah who created the heavens and earth will admit me into His paradise. Have all the pious and religious men stamp their signatures below the statement that if I accept Islam, Allah will not punish me for my sins and for my disobedience towards him for 70 years."

Desiring to respect his wishes, Hassan of Basra agreed and he immediately ran to the abodes of all the pious saints of Basra, and one by one, collected all their signature in the large document and brought it back to the fire worshiper. He then deposited the signed and verified document to the dying man and showed him how all the saints of Basra added their signature below the statement of assurance.

This time, the dying fire worshiper became so happy that he turned to the pious man and said, "Oh, Hassan! When I die, give me the burial shower and bury me with your own hands. And before you place me inside the coffin, and before the nails of the coffin are grounded, place this document in my dead hand, so that I have proof of my faith in Islam when I meet Allah. After my death, if your Allah's religion is true, then I will present this paper to Allah and His angels, and show them the proof of my Faith." Saying these words, the fire worshiper turned his face towards the heaven and announced, "I bear witness that there is no God but one Allah the creator of Adam and Eve, and I bear witness that Moses is a prophet of Allah, and Jesus is a prophet of Allah, and Muhammad is the last messenger and prophet of Allah." His voice and gestures were in tranquil unison, as he prepared to meet his creator and maker, the One Allah of Abraham, a deity he had not known until a day ago, but whose existence he felt assuredly as the daily ascent of the morning sun.

The former fire-worshiper now was an epitome of forbearance and humility, and this unique conduct secured the esteem of all those who had come to pay him their respects.

Uttering the declaration of Faith and announcing his Shahada in the presence of the pious man of Basra, the old fire worshiper died, and his last will was carried out dutifully by the saint Hassan.

After the burial night, Hassan of Basra returned home, overwhelmed by worry and sadness. He became so agitated that he could not control his tears all day and all night and remained awake, tossing and turning agitatedly, and could not sleep any longer.

The pious man borrowed a horse from his friends and went away from the city center, hoping to find some respite in another place.

For the remainder of the dark night, he kept crying, and said to himself, "Oh, my poor wretched self! Being a worthless creature immersed in sin, how could I have written a guarantee of forgiveness to another man?"

Over and over, the pious man cried out the same words, "Oh, what a sinner I am, engrossed in heedlessness, and yet how could a sinner like me give

guarantee of Allah's forgiveness to a dying man and how could I dare do that without the permission of Allah Himself?"

The pious man roamed aimlessly as he rode on the back of his horse, and passed through the downtrodden stormy roadside, farther and farther away from his city while Dawn broke and soon after daylight started flooding across the vastness of the country, when in his exhaustion, he fell into a sudden state of distressful stupor, and his eyelids drooped and his sight became blurred momentarily.

In this hazy moment, he saw a mystic vision as clearly as it was midday beneath the desert sun.

Before him, the dead fire worshiper was riding a golden carriage drawn by hundreds of royal horses, in the midst of a grandeur palatial garden in Heaven. The former fire worshiper was an old man while dying, but he now appeared handsome and youthful, and was bedecked in the finest attires and wore such a beautiful garment that the sheen of the fabric could be visible from miles away.

The dead former fire worshiper was surrounded by attendants who rode on gold horses and chariots and led him directly to Hassan. The pious man now saw that the former fire worshiper was wearing an expensive bejeweled crown which was so brilliantly illuminated, that the entire surrounding area was brightened by it.

Seeing this amazing scene, the pious man called out, "Oh, you deceased old man! How is it that you attained such a lofty position, look so youthful and in such luxury and comfort after death? Tell me, how is it that you are in Paradise, and I can see you in front of me."

To his earnest query, the former fire worshiper replied, "Oh, you pious man! Allah forgave all my sins by His sheer mercy, and I can never truly describe to you the unlimited bounties which Allah had bestowed upon me."

The deceased man then paused, and addressed Hassan directly. "I wanted to tell you that I am doing well in Allah's heaven and you no longer have to bear any responsibility for my future. Verily, the promise of your Allah is true and indeed the guarantee of your document was valid. Truly, your Allah has blessed me so much that I never thought it was possible. Allah has forgiven me and granted me the highest and loftiest position in eternal Paradise. Here, take this now." The former fire worshiper produced the signed document and held it out to Hassan of Basra. "You may take this document now. I have no need for this document of yours, and hence, wish to return it." Thus, saying, the deceased man handed over the document to the pious man who was still perched on his horse.

This movement jolted him to an alert state and suddenly, the pious man woke up from the vision. His eyesight was clear, and the dead man was there no longer. Now he widened his eyes and gazed at his hands in utter disbelief. In his palm was the signed document, rolled neatly into a thick parchment.

A wild maddening impatience struck his mind while he struggled with his fears and thoughts. Finally he mustered enough strength by Opening the

document rolled in his hand , the pious man was astonished to see that it was the exact document that he had signed and also saw the collected signatures of all the other pious men beside it confirming that this was the original parchment that was buried with the dead man.

The pious man's heart throbbed as he trembled in awe at this miracle of Allah.

How could the document buried six feet deep miles away across the fury desert and sea be given to him by a dead person who came and disappeared without any trace?

His mind was thundering with the strangest of the strangest fear.

Had Allah forgiven the man and given him heaven and then let him come down to earth to hand back this document to him? Was the heaven so real and the after life so true? And was this worldly life of a few counted days which men fought over so violently, so false and so fleeting?

The stupor of shock left him motionless and almost senseless after his body had ceased to tremble with sobs.

That the power of Allah and the truth of His paradise and the promise of Allah's forgiveness was beyond the imagination of human minds and beyond the reach of human understanding.

It was now nearly mid day and the burning sun was becoming stronger. But the feeling of shock which had seized him into a stupor of anticipation horrified him and he stayed sitting on his horse with the stillness of a statue.

The sun was burning but his heart was drowning in a despair so beyond anything he felt before, the coldness and the dreary fear stopped him from summoning up the courage to proceed any further.

The pious man trembled and shuddered as he finally looked up toward the heaven and thanked Allah in his heart, and almost soon after, began to cry and weep profusely.

He murmured fervently, "Oh, my Allah! You had verily said that You do not need a reason to do certain things.

You do not need an excuse to forgive.

You do not need an excuse to shower mercy on Your unworthy creation.

Verily, You are the Mighty and Wise!

Oh, Allah, You act without a reason, and You act without a cause and You bestow Boon and Mercy on people without any return.

I, along with the rest of Your creation is dependent on Your mercy.

He faltered and then he became terrified about his own future with Allah. He thought he could no longer find any strength to hope. The misery of the unknown future and the terrible guilt stunned his mind.

He again tried to muster up a strength to pray and the words came out in a harsh whispers as if the last words of a dying man.

My Allah! Verily, You have forgiven a man merely for uttering one statement although he had worshiped the fire, dishonoring You and disobeyed You for 70 years! Will you not forgive a man who has worshiped you for more than 70 years?"

Hassan of Basra wept vigorously as he repeated those words: "Oh, my Allah! Will not You show mercy on an undeserving creature like myself, who has been calling unto You day and night for the past seventy years? Will You not admit him into Your eternal Heaven? Will I not be spared from the callus torment of the Hell fire too? Will not my soul be saved by Your resolute Magnanimity?"

Tears flooded his eyes and streamed through his beard, as the pious man continued to weep, his body convulsing as though in pain.

My Lord ! My Creator! Look at my heart, for no one but You knows the hearts of man better! For my heart has been true to no one but You!

Unable to cease crying, he fell from his horse on his knees in the burning desert sand and facing the Temple of Abraham and cried unto his Lord , saying: Oh, my Lord! My Allah! Indeed, Thou has kept Thy promise! Indeed, Thine promise is true. Indeed, Thy words are true. I bear witness that indeed Thy religion is true. Indeed, the afterlife of the hereafter is true and the Your promise of life beyond life is truer than this temporary world form which death eventually awakes us .Indeed, this world is the life of mockery and play and the indulgence of earthy pleasures are but a jest. Indeed, this world is for an extremely short period of time.

Oh, Allah! Oh, Creator of Abraham and Adam and Jesus! Indeed, Your promise is more true than the heart that beats in my body and more real than the oxygen that we breathe and more true than the unseen wind that sweeps around me and more true than the things I touch, see or feel and Your words are more true than the Sun that rises over us, and more real than the moon which steadily wax and wane."

Saying these words, the pious man again dropped on his knees and bowed his head until his forehead touched the ground burning desert and he sobbed most bitterly to his Lord and sought forgiveness to his Maker and begged for reprieve from the Creator of his body and soul.

In his prayers, he addressed Allah as such:

"Alas Oh, Lord! Oh, my Maker!

Oh, Allah! Oh, My Merciful Lord and Sustainer! Oh, Creator of the Angels, Prophets and Humans! Indeed, you have forgiven a man who had sinned against You, and who had disobeyed You all his life, and have you forgiven one who has violated Your covenant and status of being worshiped by worshiping articles and other insignificant beings beside You.

Yet, oh, Merciful Lord, You have forgiven a man who had broken every law that You made and every commandment that You stipulated. You have forgiven a man who had sinned for the entirety of his life. But we are naught to question Your supreme command.

You have forgiven a man who never called unto You until the very last moment of his life. you have forgiven a man who had broken Your right as the Deity, and as the Creator and who worshiped a vile thing like fire, and took away Your right to be worshiped.

But You have forgiven him nonetheless, oh Lord! You have forgiven a man who sinned unceasingly for 70 years, day and night, and You welcomed him into Your paradise and forgiven all his sins and forgotten about all his past." Some passersby who saw the pitiable state of the pious man thought he was a fanatic and a dreamer, but even they could not deny their veneration towards his spiritual state and his piety. Hassan of Basra was known for unshakable candor and invariable integrity. His own belief of rectitude was the foundation of his unending prayers and unceasing prayers.

Whenever he recalled the circumstance of the demise of the former worshiper of fire, Hassan of Basra heaved a grief-stricken sigh, and sat on the cold, hard ground. Even in his utter devastation, his deportment was kind. He had prayed earnestly for the guidance of the pagan man, and now was relieved that the man had been saved from the eternal fire of hell, and this was evident on his face. Still, a lingering sadness was spread over his features, as he called his beloved deity every now and again with the following words:

"Oh, Allah, the Lord of my soul!

Oh, Lord of the heavens and earth!

Oh, Creator of this beating heart of mine! Will Thou not forgive a man who has worshipped you and cried unto you and prayed to you for seventy years?

Oh, Allah! Will Thou not give me the sanctity of Thy forgiveness?

Oh, my Allah! Will you not give me a proof of that forgiveness when I have worshipped Thee for 70 years, every lingering day and every fleeting night?

Oh, Lord of the seven heavens! Will Thou not forgive the sinner who has spent his youth, his middle age and his old age in your service- the unworthy fool whose hair has turned from black to white worshipping you, whose skin has become supple to wrinkled while worshipping You and who's back had become bent from upright all while worshipping no one but You, calling unto you, praying unto you, kneeling in front of you and asking for your forgiveness?

Oh, Lord of the sinners that has forgiven a man who had sinned against you for 70 years! Will Thou not forgive a man who had cried unto you and worshiped you for 70 years?"

He sought the certainty of the hereafter, but could not be certain of his own salvation, and this dilemma caused him a sadness that constantly attacked his mind. Often, deep sighs, and even volleys of tears escaped him as he contemplated on the wonders of the world with the following words.

"Oh, Lord of Abraham! Will Thou not give me surety of Thy forgiveness, and certainty of Thy clemency?

Will not Thou give me proof of my forgiveness?

Oh, Allah! Will not Thou give me a promise of that celestial pardon and let my final moments be in worshipping Thee?, the Supreme Creator, so that I may spend my final act in worship, whilst in a state of pristine purity, all the while, trusting and believing in Thee."

His passionate pleas to his Lord caused calmness to descend on his heart. No longer had he the agitated aura of sternness or discontent on his expression. With contentment in his heart, Hassan of Basra made peace with his Maker with the following words: "I have hopes on Your Clemency, and my faith is founded on the boundless mercies of my Allah and Creator, who has watched over me from earliest childhood, and encompassed me with His love and protecting care. My Allah! Your mercy has followed me to every place I have traversed and when in my delusions, I was ready to give up all for lost, in hopelessness and despair, You, my Allah, returned my soul to the Truth with Your kindness by showering me with blessings and mercy! My soul and body belie all else which distracts man away from their Creator! So let me love and die in while in Thy Mercy and forgiveness!

What Happens after Death

Expensive cars. Fancy nightclubs. Loud blasting music. Vulgar lyrics. Objectified dancers. Consensually used escorts.

Unending servings of drinks and alcohol. Drugs of all kind. Ecstasy and substance abuse. Human beings objectifying themselves and people preying after each other like animals on a hunt, and lusting after each other's bodies like untamed animals.

Obscene abundance of money and wealth. The seemingly eternal beauty of youth. The robust rigor of good health. Unceasing flow of money and stimulants and the company of those who are the slaves of wealth and luxury and fame.

Upscale bars, expensive drinks, extravagant and comfortable hotel rooms. Lewd music of soulless lyrics. Salacious humans being jealous of one another, busy in their lust after one another.

This eighteen-year-old youth of Dubai had not a care in the world, except to enjoy the vast wealth his father had bequeathed him. He had no feelings for the people who were suffering and no sense of duty towards his parents and family. Never did he allow the slightest disturbance to affect his heart upon witnessing the suffering of all the people who were battling poverty in the war-torn countries around the world.

He lived in a city of Gold, in the heart of Dubai, and his life was centered around lust and luxury and the undying obsession to please other humans, and worshiping their bodies and doing everything to get worshiped or lusted back in return. He thought it was a thing of pride to dishonor oneself and one's own body while only seeing one's worth in the love of others and objectifying oneself and chasing after other people who enjoyed objectifying themselves.

This was the life of the youth who lived in Dubai.

This was the life he lived.

His family was afraid that this would be the way he will die.

Every time, the young man hosted parties, the events evolved into nightclub scenes, with scantily clad dancers and pop singer taking the stage with audacious dance moves. The errant party pulsed deep into the night and early morning hours, a disgraceful show on full display.

One day a guest arrived at his house who happened to be a very religious man, he also was a very religious scholar and a former teacher of the youth.

Having recognized the errant youth, the scholar stood up and called out:

"Oh, slave of God! What has happened to you that you have been so dishonored in your own eyes and so disgusting to yourself that you cherish every love, every hate, every praise and every look of a human being?

Oh, creation of God! What has happened to you that you subsist only for the attention of humans, only for their love, and only for their respect and their lust?

Oh, slave of God! What has happened to you?

How could you have become so low in your own eyes, and so deplorable and to yourself?

Why have you become so human-oriented?

Did you become so animalistic in your own eyes that even the servitude of other human beings seems honorable to you?

What has become of your dignity, that you have been so disesteemed in your own eyes that to be used by other humans makes you feel honorable?

How is it that to be mistreated and to be insulted and become the victim of immodest human's lust has made you feel honorable?

What has come over you? What has become of your honor?

What has become of your pride? What has come over your humanity and your nobility?

Have you lost all your respect?

Have you lost all your honor?

Have you lost all your nobility and your pride?

Have you become so horrendous and so filthy in your own eyes that you have no worth except for what other humans see you as? Do you think you have no value , that you have no worth unless some repulsive humans lust you? Do you truly believe you have no worth unless other loathsome humans love you?

What has become to your senses, that you are so desperate to please them, that you are slaving after them much more desperately than their own pet dogs?

What has become of you that instead of being an honorable and respectable creation of God and a ruler of human beings and the saint of Dubai, you are getting yourself attached to human desires and shackled to their lust and slave of their dirty flesh?

Why have you become enslaved by begrimed men and women, and so desperately tethered by it that even I cannot make you dignify yourself?

Have you become so enslaved to those revolting humans that I cannot make you respect yourself enough to make you not constantly want to worship a vile human and constantly desire to chase a human body and constantly hope to be in their lewd company?"

The young man was momentarily stunned to hear about his own spiritual conditions, for he himself did not realize that he was a slave of his own lust and fettered to the desire of other impure human beings.

But he did not wish to listen to the advice of the pious man and continued to enjoy his life of luxury.

The youth returned to his old lifestyle and continued in his quest to fulfill his own lust and often called it love. If any young man or woman denied his sexual advances, he shamed them as cruel judgmental and heartless while pursuing them with lavish gifts and love letters until they succumbed to his desires. He often payed their spouses or threatened their spouses to leave them or frame their partners as unloyal, so that his targets would become single and believe in his claims of love. And soon afterwards he would take on another target.

Several months later another pious man saw him in a disgraceful situation and called out to him by his name;

"Oh, youth! What has made you so dishonorable in your own eyes?

What has made you so deplorable in your own eyes and so low that you need the praise and the worshiping of other humans to know your own worth?

Oh, youth of the modern world! Don't you know that you are a creation of a most great God and that itself is enough for you not to be so desperate to please other human beings and to be their servant of desire and lust? You do not need to impress them and worship them and chase after their love and their loyalty which is so temporary and so fleeting! The love and hate of mortal humans are so useless and so unimportant.

Oh, you heedless young man! Do not follow the lifestyle of dogs and animals. Do not chase after lust and your own desires.

Do not worship and chase after the victims of lust and do not get obsessed with the lust of humans the way the dogs run after dogs all day!

Oh, slave of God! Elevate yourself, because God has honored you by making you a human being. Do not follow the lifestyle and the routine of dogs and animals by chasing after lust all day and all night the way those canines run after their own meal and race after their own lust!

Do not be dishonored like them, but become pure and repent to the one God. Learn to honor your body, learn to honor yourself, learn to love the most honorable God the most, and become a worthy creation of your One Supreme God.

Oh, slave of the most Revered God! Celebrate your honor in yourself, because you are the slave of the greatest Creator!

Do not lower yourself to the standard of pigs, dogs and animals whose only obsession in life is lust and desire and chasing after each other for the fulfillment of their lowly carnal pleasures. Learn to esteem yourself and learn to be proud of your body because you are a creation of a most Gracious God.

The young man got quite ferocious after hearing his admonishment. The man almost screamed out in a passionate rage of hate and anger. Don't you dare judge me he screamed! I am proud to be a slave of others humans flesh and lust! Don't you worshippers of God think yourselves better than me!

The man begged him to listen and not take everything personally!

" I am trying to teach you to honor yourself oh you foolish one! Indeed the slavery of lust and polluted people has made your heart blind with self loathing and anger!

Do not be angry at the worshipers of God, nor at those who try to preach to you the importance of honor and nobility by telling you to stay away from desires and slavery of other filthy human beings. Do not be angry at those who tell you to worship the most honorable God and exhort you to follow His honorable commandments. Become honorable yourself, and cast aside those foul humans who distract you, for those vulgar humans are only trying to take you away from the life that you ought to follow and they are trying to make you dishonorable.

Do not stoop so low that you become so blinded in your own self-loathing and lustful obsession of your own desires and the chasing of other beastly human

flesh like animals , that whenever someone tries to save you from the dirtiness, you get angry at them.

Have you and your heart become so dirty staying in the garbage that now, the dirt feels good and you feel offended when someone tries to pull you away from the filth and try to make you clean, perfume your soul, and make you honorable? Do you become angry because you believe - admitting that you were in the wrong will make you feel bad, so you convince yourself and others that lusting after human bodies like monstrous animals and worshipping loathsome humans and making them your heart and soul's master like a pet dog, is something to be proud of?

Oh, slave of God! Remove yourself from the dirty desires of the unclean human flesh of others- abandon their worshiping and their slavery and their servitude and become pure and honorable by purifying your mind and keeping no one in the world in your mind and your heart except for God, because your mind and your body is so honorable that no vile human deserves the right or honor to have a presence in it except for the most honorable and most supreme and Noble and Just and Merciful God, the Creator of your soul and your body."

The Dubai youth shut his ears from the incessant preaching of the elderly man and began to leap around the luxurious club house, and shared the jacuzzi, spa and massage room, and lounge bar with his friends. For him, it was indeed a night of glitz, glamour and exclusivity dancers glided across the floor.

The pious man ignored all the commotion and continued to preach:

"Oh, slave of God! Know that the God who created you and gave birth to you in this world while you were sinless loves you most assuredly!

If you repent to him most honorably, and if you turn away from the slavery and the lust of human beings, God will take you back with honor and you will become as sinless as the day you were born.

But, oh slave of God! Fear the wrath of God, for He loves those who loves Him and He gets hurt and dislikes those who hate Him.

Oh, son of Adam! Be afraid of the wrath of God, because when one loves someone the most, they get angry most solemnly.

I warn you about the anger of the One God.

If you receive punishment from Him, it means He still loves you. The more He punishes you in the world, the more evidence you have that He had loved you the most and He expected you to return to him in sincere repentance with a purified heart and soul.

Oh, youth! The anger of your Lord is becoming even more stronger because of your unceasing disobedience of him. So, heed my warning!"

Once more, the youth of Dubai reveled in his wealth and continued to disobey the commandments of his God. He partied all night at clubs and yachts and ignored all the religious men and women who pleaded with him to become pious and fear God and be righteous and charitable and sinless.

The youth disregarded all the advice of his relatives and religious friends, and continued to live a life of sin and lust and squandering extravagance while all

the poor people around him suffered in hunger. He collected youths from the streets and encouraged them to accompany him on his parties. On his birthdays, he hosted drug-fueled parties, and encouraged all other youths to sin like him and let their bodies be insulted to others and misuse others bodies in return.

During one of these hard parties, his elder brother confronted him and offered some advice. He implored, "Oh younger brother of mine! What has happened to you that all your friends and your lovers are worth so much to you that you yourself have become a pawn in their game?

What has happened to you that you yourself have become a servant to them, and behave like a slave to their body and a menial attendant to their desires? Have you not noticed that you are behaving like a dog in the way you chase them just to worship them and just to make yourself resemble their pets and their zoo animals, as though you are in bound in their ownership?"

The eighteen-year-old Dubai boy became angry at his older brother for trying to stop him from sinning, so he replied: "I will do as I please, brother, and I will not listen to your advice."

"Dearest brother of mine!" The older brother replied felicitously, feeling a terrible tightness in his chest as he thought about the prospective future of his younger, sinful brother. "You and I, we share the bond of blood! We have learned to ride bike together. We have played with the same toys as children, I have taught you how to drive. Surely, you must know I only seek what is best for you! Surely I have the right to feel pain by the way you are conducting yourself! I beseech you to honor yourself! I beg you to respect yourself and to free yourself from the bondage of human beings, and to extricate your body from the bondage of their lust and remove yourself from the bondage of their slavery and from the bondage of their relationships. Oh, brother of mine! Remove yourself from the dirtiness of other humans and purify yourself with the remembrance and the commandments of your One Honorable God!"

The eighteen-year-old man shook his head angrily, and answered. "I will not obey your God, brother, and nor will I follow His orders.

I will not be subjected to His commandments.

I will not follow His laws of what is right and what is wrong. I will do as I feel like! I will love whom I will feel like loving I will hate who I feel like hating.

No laws can stop me.

Not only will I do what I feel like doing, I will teach people to do what they feel like doing. Whatever you call a sin, I will make people call it a virtue.

Whatever action religious men like you teach people to be ashamed of, I will teach people to be proud of it.

I do not care what kind of immorality people indulge into. I don't care who they hurt.

It matters not to me who I hurt nor who I torture or abuse.

I will make people enjoy using other people's body and I will teach them to enjoy being insulted and be happy to be abused and mistreated until there's no difference between humans and dogs.

I will destroy honor and the existence of chastity and I will destroy all those who teach people to be chaste and pious and god fearing and honorable.

The young heedless boy became angered with a feat of hatred which caused such fury in his eyes as if it could blast through all those who came near. His older brother was shaken to core by the passion that he screamed with but he mustered enough strength to his his fear and stood listening to what his brother had to say.

If you enjoy insulting yourself then atleast think of your family , think of our mother who loves you when you were young, for her honor and love do not sin oh my young hot tempted brother! Think of your family and honor yourself even if you don't care for your own self respect!

The younger brother fumed and shouted in a state of utter madness, I don't care who hates me or my family for I will do what I feel like doing! This world and this life are short and I will live it up fully. I will teach people to sin and be proud of their sins. I will hate and teach hatred towards everyone who preaches righteousness. I will paint the people who preaches righteousness as the most evil, backward and disgusting human beings. I will make people hate them so much that they will pelt them with stones and abuse and bully them and throw them out of civilization if they do much as attempt to call a sin a sin and not agree to call all sins and every disgraceful act of immortality "pride". They will torture those religious men seize all their money away and have them arrested and send them to prison or I will send all religious people away to slave away in poor houses and remain in quarantine. I will make people disconnect with all the pious men, and hate them and alienate them and fight them. I will make people sin everywhere and I will teach them that sinning is great and glorious and something extremely honorable". I will make everyone proud of their sins. I will teach people that sinning adultery fornication and sexual relationships with everyone regardless of gender age or family relations is pride. I will teach people do so as they want to do . I will teach the whole world to do whatever makes them happy. I will make everyone as sexually active as me through brainwashing them by making sexually deviant movies and talk shows and novels and anyone who tries to call it bad will be destroyed and insulted and tortured and bullied to death. I will teach people that the greater oppressors are those who try to stop people from sexually using each other's body and I will teach people that lust of all sorts and any sort is love. I will teach people that righteousness, abstinence and preaching religion is most insulting, demeaning, dehumanizing and oppressively painful." Saying these he sneered at his older brother causing the older brothers heart to shudder in fear and sadness.

The older brother tried to interrupt politely, and entreated: "Pray, tell me, little brother! Why do you dislike to hear my exhortation?"

The youth of Dubai replied to his brother: "I hate you and all religious people like you.

I will make sure that people hate you and see your pitiful end results.

If any religious person makes one minute mistake or makes one fault, I will make sure that the whole world constantly repeats it, publicizes it, spreads it, writes about it and believes it and hate them for it, until not one person is left on earth who will believe that religious or anything but double faced sick vile abusive people.

I will do everything in my power to constantly identify religious people with all kinds of evilness.

I will teach people that the sinners are the one who deserve to be proud, and that the adulterers, the fornicators and the sexually deviated people who perform shameful acts with anyone and everyone they feel like doing it with are the most righteous of all men. I will tell people how much of a victim they are and if people don't support them in their sexual deviation, they'll die in pain.

I will teach people that they should be proud of those sins and they should be proud of adultery and fornication.

I will never ever obey your laws because obeying your laws and your God means that I was in the wrong.

I will never admit or accept that I was in the wrong by following my desires.

In order to appear noble, I will hate and murder and torture anyone who tries to preach abstinence of any kind.

No God is real there's nothing called here after. I will worship human bodies and list them and I will be the slave of my own desire and I will be the slave of other human beings. I enjoy being people's slave I enjoy serving people with my body and soul. I will be people's slave and the slave of my desires and I will hate, bully and torture anyone who tries to stop me or anyone like me."

The brother was shocked to hear his younger brothers harsh words and he cried out in a low voice! Oh my half brother! I swear if I hated you I would never have preached you righteousness after all the insults I have faced in your hand! But every time I see you sin and destroy your soul and body by enslaving it to unworthy humans I come back to warn you! I cannot help it, but I come back to advice you! If I hated you I'd let you sin and destroy yourself and live in hell in both worlds! But my love for you makes me admonish you and you say I hate you?

The older brother could barely finish his pleading but was moved to tears by his brother's perfidy and went away.

Meanwhile, the young man of Dubai continued to host parties for his peers. He hosted one of the most expensive private concerts ever held. He and his corrupt friends loved to indulge in unrestraint overindulgence.

They embodied the pinnacle of lavish parties that featured appearances by celebrities who danced and sang all evening, and devoured intoxicants carelessly, while enjoying tons of lobster prepared by legion of chefs.

As his peers sang and danced, the youth went around and encouraged all the guests to engage in free and shameful lust.

The youth's neighbors and the pious men of Dubai City called unto him whenever they saw him walk by and exhorted him to worship one God. But every time they preached to him about the religion of one God, he became fiercely angry with them. He would shout, "Don't you dare tell me that I'm wrong! I have the right to do whatever I want. I have the right to my own happiness. Don't you dare tell me or force me to do something that will make me unhappy!"

Occasionally, the pious men would say: "Oh, young man. make yourself happy within the commandments of your God, for once you start chasing your lust and your desires and become abased, and become obsessed with pleasing yourself, there will be no end to your pleasing yourself! Eventually, you will do any detestable acts in order to please yourself. You will get bored and become more and more violent to please yourself. There's no end to animalistic self appeasement! You will feel like hurting people or doing things that will make other people hurt. So, stop pleasing yourself and start pleasing God! Let yourself be pleased with his commandments because when human beings start chasing after their own desires and their own happiness, there is no limit or end to it. They become animals who kill others in order to please themselves and who become happy to bite and chew human beings and kill babies. Do not become like animals for verily, the only difference between animals and us is the laws and the commandments of one God. Oh, slave of God! Do not be proud of your sins, for if you sin, then at least be humble and repentant. Do not be proud like the animal who kills human beings and then becomes proud of his hunt."

These exhortations angered the young man and he rebuked them terribly by shouting:

"Oh, you old men! You are miserable in your life and trying to make all others miserable. Indeed, I will hit you if you try to preach me goodness one more time. I will do evilness and I will tell everyone to be as evil as I am. I will teach people to chase their own desires and be lustfully indulgent with whoever they want in whichever way they wish, whether it is legal by God's law or not. I will make my own laws against the laws of God and I will make people hate the laws of God and make them love my own laws. I will tell people to chase their lust and be proud of it, and I will teach people to destroy, hate and insult all those who try to stop them from lusting after other humans who are illegal by your God."

A wise man among the pious men responded gently: "Oh, creation of God! Know this, that no matter how much sin you have accumulated in your history and your past, God is the only One in the whole universe who will never judge you or be disgusted by you, no matter how horrendous your sins were! After all, you are His creation and you are in His ownership and whether you admit it to it or not, whether you accept it or not, you are the slave and the creation of the One God. Even human beings cannot easily hate their own, and similarly, a parent cannot easily hate their own children because they believe that they belong to them. You belong to your God, so your God will never hate you. Your God will never dishonor you or be disgusted by you or your past. It is

the despicable humans that you lust after who will defile you. It is the humans that you worship that will abandon you. It is the humans that you love that will be disgusted of your past and will be repulsed by your thoughts and your sins. Be warned! It will be those sinful humans you cherish that will find out about your secrets today or tomorrow and hate you most passionately. In the end, no one but God will be left for you. So, go to the place of worship and leave the humans that hate you and are disgusted by you. Waste no more time, no more money, no more energy and no more of your brains to please the sickly mortal human beings! Abandon those verminous, lonely human beings and use your energy, your brain, and your honorable body to exalt yourself and worship the God with Whom you will become honorable and sinless as His angels."

"I will do what I feel like doing I will live my own life." The young man replied, unmoved. "I will have sexual activity with any relations and gender whom I choose. I will choose to desire and lust after whoever I feel like do lusting after, and I will teach everyone to do as they will, and to insult all the religious people who tell us that what we do is sin or shameful! I will tell everyone to be proud of their sins. I will make people go on processions of pride. I will make people sin right and left I will make them hate the religious people I will make them hate the people who stay away from lust and desires. I will teach them that all the religious people like you are disgusting and evil. I will teach them to insult you and to feel sorry for us. I will teach people to love honor and respect us sinful people those who constantly be in their acts of sexual desires and I will teach people to hate religious people who constantly tell people to stop lustful passions and desires."

All those who preached to the young man begged him to follow the Faith of Abraham, which was the heir to ancient and universal truths, and the principles of social and human stability. It was a pristine religion which this chaotic world has desperate need of, and by worshipping the One God, nations after nations could be saved from damnation, and the people of the contemporary world who were battering themselves to death being deluged in sins, and busy insulting each other and using each other's body in lustful madness, this honorable God and his honorable laws is needed in the midst of a humanity which was polarized between East and West, North and South, this belief in the Final Testament and the Last Apostle offered hope as well as a connecting link between God and His creation. Without faith, men had nothing to look forward to but division, defeat, subjection and confusion, lust hatred and jealousy and greed.

The young man of Dubai however, chose to remain indulged in a world of materialism, hedonism and technology, and made lust of man the central certainty of his life.

The youth and his friends now lived in a spiritual and psychological vacuum. He prided himself in being secular, agnostic and Godless, and shunned all moral law, social practice and, prayers.

The symbiosis of life and death made no difference to them, and the heedless youths continued to sin with impunity and rebuffed all efforts to steer them into the path of One God.

During a lavish night at a wealthy eatery, the eighteen-year-old man invited all those present to indulge in binge drinking with him.

Many youths joined him, and the sinned openly, until the boy's uncle passed by and heard all the commotion.

He halted by the gate, and called out:

"Oh, nephew! I fear the wrath of God might befall you!

I fear the God of Abraham will descend his anger upon you because of your violence, sins and the way you make everyone else engage in sinful activities."

Upon hearing these words, the young man's anger became relentless and unmatched as he thundered roared: "No, by the heavens! No punishment has ever come upon me! I have seen religious people living in abject sadness and in poor condition in the streets I have seen pious men like you starving and dying in wars and battles. Indeed, I have sinned relentlessly and not one prick of thorn has ever pricked my foot neither have I become sick nor has any calamity of your God descended upon me. Old fool! You cannot threaten me with the rights of your God with the anger of your God. I'm not afraid of His anger for I am happy and I shall live a long life and nothing will ever come upon me and nothing has ever come upon me."

The youth's uncle answered graciously. "Hear my words! If you notice that the punishment of God has ceased falling upon you, then be assured that God does not want you anymore. For when one commits sins, God sends down punishment so that the person realizes his abuse and crimes and gets a chance to turn to God and repent and ask the Almighty for forgiveness. But when God stops sending punishments, it means God does not want that person to enter the folds of mercy anymore. It means someone has become so obsequious, that a darkness has come over your heart that an eerie cruelty has blinded your heart and mind and blinded your eyes from seeing the truth. Such beggarly desires and lust and hate and vengeance has come upon you that God does not want you return to Him anymore.

I warn you, oh creation of God! I warn you, that if God has stopped his punishment from coming upon you, it means he does not want you to repent anymore. You must fear the sin, and be terrified of sinning, and when you continue to sin, and you notice that instead of punishment, God is increasing you in bounties, do not rejoice, for it merely means that your chances of redemption are dwindling.

Oh, my own sisters son! Do not deprive yourself of the love of your God! Do not deprive yourself of the forgiveness of your god. Do not deprive yourself of the loyalty of your only true God. Because no love and no loyalty of this world and it's people is everlasting or real. The only love the only loyalty the only respect you will ever get in this world and in the afterlife is from your God your creator your sustainer."

Most of this youth's parties were hedonistic as he was determined to live sinfully and lavishly. One evening, as he made his way back to his home after spending the night with disrobed and drunken dancers, another religious man awaited him at his door. Upon seeing his ashen face, the man cried:

"Oh, young man! When will you give up this life of servitude? When will cease doting on your peers who will not assist you in the torment of the hereafter?"

The youth scowled angrily and said, "What do you understand about life, old man? I am determined to live my life according to the whims of my desire! I enjoy being a slave of my lust and I love to serve my peers and obey their desires."

"Oh, slave of God!" The religious man cried. "You are not so deplorable as to serve useless humans!"

Oh, slave of God! Oh, the creation of the most honorable God!

Know that you are honorable. Know that you are respectable. Be proud. Treat yourself like a human being and not a dog! Honor yourself enough to respect yourself and your body!

You are perfect. You are the creation of the most honorable God and your God loves you the most! By His love, you will become pure. You will become just.

You will become an angel.

Oh, creation of God! Chase no longer after other human's dirty bodies and flesh. Seek not their lust but instead, love and worship the One, most honorable God, and become as pure and elevated as his angels who never sin."

The young man from Dubai shouted angrily at the religious man and warned him to stay away from him. The youth then headed to his exclusive black-and-white masquerade ball, and served drinks to all those who were in attendance, and he indulged in other wild sins with his body and the body of others until it was morning time.

From being a not-so-secret partier, the youth slowly became a defiant drinker and dancer. He spent his nights in secret clubs and remained in the company of strippers and hosted opulent galas for his sinful friends. His relatives summoned several elderly men from the village and begged them to counsel him, but he haughtily ignored their entreaties and insisted on sinning along with his heedless peers.

As he hurried to his next party, the religious man followed him and called out, "Oh, youth of this modern world!"

But the youth continued to walk away, but the pious man did not give up so easily.

"Oh, creation of God! The more you worship people, the more they will despise you!"

The more you lust after them, the more they will be disgusted of you and the more they will be disgusted by your presence.

Know this! No matter how much you have sinned and no matter how much you have dishonored yourself and no matter how much you have disobeyed God and no matter how much you have hated God when you come back to Him, he will take you back with honor with respect and will treat you with love and never, ever will God remember your past and never ever will God be disgusted of you because of your sins or your past.

Oh, youth! Know that your God is never angry at his creation just like one's parent cannot ever be disgusted of their own children.

No! God can never be disgusted of His own fine creation like yourself.

Know this also, oh creation of God! Always reassure yourself that no matter how much you sin and how much you dishonor yourself, you will always be most cherished and most honored in the eyes of God, and when you come back to Him, He will love you most wholeheartedly.

**Know this, oh young creation of God! All human beings can hate you and be disgusted of you, but your God will always honor you, because God loves you and when you love Him back, he loves you even more without any judgment, without any memory, without any tribute of your past sins.
Oh, creation of God! Use your past sins as a fuel for your repentance.
Let the sins of your past make you most repentant and most humble to God.
Verily, God loves sinners, and the more humble you are to God, the more you will love Him the more He will love you and the more He will honor you in this earth and in the heavens."**

Again and again, the religious men of the town exhorted the youth to give up his sinful ways and accept the love and mercy of his Lord, but the man turned a deaf ear to these advices and continued in his old ways. He became one of the most lustful and indulgent youth in Dubai city, and often spent his days devouring bottomless Beluga caviar and flowing champagne and sang and danced with added gusto.

**Once more, the pious man called out these departing words:
"Oh, creation of God! Worship the one God that created you! Follow the commandments of the one God that created you! Obey the one God who created you, and do not disobey the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the one who was not begotten nor did he beget, the one who has no partners and no children, the One who is the most Sublime, the most Pure, the most Just, the most Honorable and the most High!
Follow His religion, follow His commandments, obey His laws and be pure and great as the God Himself is.
Oh, creation of God! Do not be enslaved by your desires and the dirtiness of luau and greed of this temporary world.
Oh, creation of God! How long will you disobey God?
How long will you dishonor God by dishonoring yourself?
How long will you live on God's Earth and disobey his commands?
How long will you wage a war against God, living on His Earth, eating His food, breathing His air?
Oh, slave of God! Don't you have any shame in you?
Oh, slave of God! Don't you have any virtue in you?
Don't you have any honor that you disobey the God who created you, who fed you, who kept you alive, and to Whom you will one day return?
Have you no shame that God watches you commit sin in depravity while all His other servants and creations are pure and pious?
Oh, slave of God! Why are you being arrogant towards God, and enslaved to other humans?
Why do you hate a God who loves you and love a human who hates you , if not today then tomorrow?!
Oh, slave of God! Oh, creation of God! Oh, young man! Why do you wage a war against your Lord?
Oh young man! Why do you dishonor and despise your creator who awaits you and never judges you while you honor, worship and be enslaved by a human being who is secretly disgusted of you and your lust and slavery?
Why do you hate God with such vengeance?
Why do you get angry at God's commandments?"**

Why do you disobey God and obey the whims of revolting and putrid humans who are created from dirty and unclean mud?

Why are you proud to disobey God and are so eager to humble yourself to humans?

Oh, creation of God! Be honorable, and be humble with your honorable God and be proud with humans.

Oh, slave of God! Do not be enslaved by human's lust do not be a captive of other human's bodies and do not be enchained by human lust and do not be beguiled by the dirtiness of this temporary world.

Do not be enslaved by the unclean riches of this vice-filled temporary world.

Oh, slave of God! Do not be humble yourself to the polluted and unsanitary humans and their lust and be proud to the honorable and respectable God.

Oh, slave of God! What has happened to you that you became a servant of humans and an enemy of God?

Oh, slave of God! Be honorable, and be proud with humans!

Do not love them! Do not lust after them and do not seek pleasure from the sullied and unclean flesh of human beings.

Oh, slave of God! Be proud with humans but be humble with your honorable and loving and most merciful God who has given you everything that anyone could ever desire, and yet you disobey Him, and yet you dislike Him, and yet you hate Him.

Oh, slave of God! Do not worship scummy putrid human bodies! Do not be enslaved by them! Do not be an animal to them! Do not worship them and do not be their servant!

Oh, creation of God! Is it that you are angry with God because you have become the servants and the slaves of contaminated human lust?

Have you become so low that you do not recognize the honorable God and his honorable commands? Or has your servitude and your slavery for man make you so blind and so hateful towards the righteous, the pure and the pious, that you hate God and all the pious and pure people who worship that Noble God?

If that is the case, then remember that God will forgive you the moment you turn to Him. And know that the nauseating humans that you lust after and the repugnant humans that you worship and the shameless humans that you are loving and the repellant humans that you want to impress will all despise you eventually be disgusted of you secretly, no matter how much service you do for them. The more you love them, the more you lust after their filthy bodies, the more you worship those dirty human beings, the more they will dislike you, despise you, dishonor you and hate you and they will celebrate and rejoice when you are gone.

Know, oh creation of God, that the more you worship God, and the more humble you are to God and the more you follow his commandments and his laws, the more God will honor you, respect you and cherish you and glorify you both in this world and in the afterlife. Your God will make you honorable to the very human beings that you tried to impress before, but this time, when you worship God, you will become so honorable yourself and so respectable that those unkempt people's love, obedience and loyalty will not matter to you at all. Once you have the God of Abraham on your side, people will be irrelevant to you, and their approval and disapproval will make no difference to your mode of life. It will feel as though a cat was being loyal to you, or an animal was loving you because your heart and mind will be too free, too pure

and too sublime to be impressed by the love and the hate of unimportant human beings."

One night, the young man adorned himself with brocades and gold-studded watches and took out his luxurious vehicle in order to head to a night party with his sinful friends.

On his way out of the touch censored garage, he noticed the haggard and worried face of his elder brother, glimmering before him. The man's older brother stood before the doorway, and blocked his path.

The young man screamed in rage, and said, "Be confounded, elder brother! Get out of my way!"

"Oh, my dear youngest brother!" The older brother cried. "I have come here tonight for one reason only. You are my brother, and I want to help you lead a righteous life. I beg you, do not go to the despicable party and sin with your hard-hearted friends."

His brother then confronts him and exhorts him to abstain from such horrifying sins. He begs him, do not go to those vile parties and dishonorable gatherings of heedless men and women! Those you seek to lust after today , are temporary worthless beings, who will one day become stenchy putrid corpse.

Where is your honor and your pride?

Do you think you are a swine and the child of a swine who stay in dirt and list after each other and have no laws and no religion?

Have you no sense of respect or self-respect?

Does it not shame you to become so low in the sight of other disgraceful human beings?

Do you not feel ashamed to become enslaved to the lowly creatures, and faithless human beings, who will all die one day and end up in shallow graves, with their bodies rotting and skull filled with worms and insects? Maybe you are low to yourself, but you are honorable in the sight of God, and you have no right to demean yourself, no matter how much you wish to do so."

When the youth heard his older brother speak so earnestly, he protested vehemently and insisted that he desired to be slave to his friends and have relations with men and women.

The older brother cried out. "Oh, why do you find it to be an honorable thing to debase yourself?

Why do you take so much pride in enslaving yourself to a lowly being while at the same time you think it to be a disgrace to worship the Almighty Creator, while the ignoble and disgusting humans can neither give you life nor death, can neither give you wealth nor power, can neither give you happiness or affluence, and yet you find it to be a such a honor to make it your life's only purpose and obsession to be enslaved to those lustful men and women, that you willingly are disgraced and demeaned by another mundane creation that has no worth in the eyes of men or God?

Why do you find it so reprehensible to worship the one God of Abraham?

Do you really think yourself unworthy?

Do you consider yourself to be so low and so dirty that you think you are unworthy and unclean and undeserving of worshiping the Almighty creator of the heavens and the Earth, the Pure, and Sublime?

Do you not feel inclined to worship the God who loves you unconditionally, and nurtures you without any return and showers you with bounties without any reason?"

The eighteen-year-old youth did not reply and continued in his debauchery, and he spent all his days serving drinks and harmful substances to his peers. He had been hard-partying during his formative years, and continued abusing alcohol, cocaine, and heroin while clubbing and bouncing from party to party. He lusted devotedly after his peers and despite addictions and even arrests, the youth was defiant in sinning and making others sin. He was popular among his friends for hosting marathon parties, in which during each multi-day extravaganza, unlimited wine would be served.

Month after month, and year after year, all the religious people of Dubai City tried again and again to exhort him and plead with him to worship One God and become pious and God-fearing, but the more they pleaded, the more angry and hateful he became. The more they preached to him, the more violent and rebellious he became.

With everything he did, he became more proud and he taught people to become proud of their sins.

He encouraged other youths to defy God and taught them what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right.

He taught people to do adultery, fornication and to indulge in sexual acts with everyone with whom God has forbidden it.

He always drank wine and did drugs and he made other people do drugs and take ecstasy.

The youth was obsessed with his own desires and his own lust, and with every passing day, he became more and more enslaved by other human beings. He started chasing and lusting after his peers, one after the other, and chased all the human beings he set his eyes on.

After a long time, the excessive drinking and drugs took a toll on his health, and the substance he abused took a toll on his body.

With each passing day, he became more weak and more tired and more sick, but his anger and his hatred for God and the religious people became even more stronger. In those sickly moments, some of his relatives approached him and entreated him to give up his vice, but the man said resolutely: "I will hate all these religious people, and I will hate their God. I will hate their religion and I will hate the people who preach righteousness."

The young man's debauchery became more and more pronounced.

He soon was considered the king of partying and would be seen with his sinful companions entering and leaving clubs in a drunken stupor, as he wobbled home and fell asleep, often on the dirty pavement, his mouth agape, after a night out with his friends. In the evenings, the youth would snort drugs and abuse harmful substances, and encourage others to follow his example. He would continue drinking, smoking and partying all night, until his health began to fail, and those dangerous drinks and addictive substances began to wreck his internal organs. His well-wishers pleaded with him to cease

drinking and partying, but the young man was adamant and insisted he would always indulge in lustful desires and would slave after men and women, and serve them all his life with his body and soul and brains.

One morning, the religious man who led the five times prayers in the local house of worship knocked on the youth's door, and asked for permission to enter, but the young man refused. He shouted, "Get away, for I have only hatred towards men of faith!"

Hearing his rebuke, the religious man replied:

"Oh, son of Adam! Turn away from sinning and do not abuse yourself.

Do not demean yourself.

Turn to God and learn to respect your body and your soul.

Stay away from the slavery of human forms, and abstain from their company.

Shun all creation from your thoughts, and do not try to please their low dogly desires.

Oh, youth! Respect yourself enough to honor yourself.

Have enough pride to turn away from dirty human beings and turn to the One Lord who loves you and honors you more than any living human soul.

Oh, young man whom God loves! If only were your mind and temperament legalistic by nature, you would understand that a certain literal-mindedness is characteristic of the good believer. A righteous person obeys the commandments on the One Merciful God out of gratefulness and loves the Creator who created all and who never does injustice.

Oh, young man, this is an age of change and fluidity, where the outworks of religion are eroded by the times! Therefore, it has become more necessary for us to establish what are the essentials of the Faith and remain steadfast in them.

Disobeying the commands of your God will never result in happiness or success.

Repent from your sins and come to the obedience of your God!"

The youth huffed in rage. He shouted on top of his voice. "Fie to you! How can you dare counsel me in this manner? Mark my words. I will never admit or accept that I was in the wrong. I do not care what your God did for me! I do not care what happens to me in the future. Truly, I hate everyone who is righteous."

"What a bizarre thought and a preposterous emotion to be nurturing!" The religious man implored. "Pray! Tell me, why do you hate those who are righteous?"

The sinful young man replied. "I hate them because they think they are better than me. They think they are good." His eyes gleamed as he continued. "I will show them how evil they are! I will show the world how evil they are! I will try to make them bad! I will try to destroy their morals and ethics. I will try to preach them evilness and if I can't preach it to them, I'll preach it to their children. I will teach their children immorality, falsehood, fornication and adultery. I will teach their children that sinning grievously is a nobility and a thing to be proud about. I will encourage them to become vile and sexually

deviant with pride. I will never ever let anyone respect the religious men and women. I hate those who are righteous and pure and thinks themselves great. I have been drowning in my own desires and sins, and I will make sure that I drown as many people as I can with me."

"Surely, you plan to wage a losing battle, oh, youth!" The religious advisor cried. "The loving God in heaven seeks to pardon you and yet, you want to defy his commands! Fear the God of Abraham!"

The young man shouted defiantly. "No God is powerful enough to fight me. No God can harm me, and no laws of the hereafter can affect me. The afterlife you talk about is not real, and neither is this God of your's real, and there is nothing called a life after death. Know this! I will worship none! I will be the slave of my own desires and I will be the slave of other human beings. I enjoy being people's slave. I enjoy being subjugated by other men and women, and I pride myself in serving people with my body and soul. You dare call me the slave of One God! Watch me, and see how I continue being random people's slave as well the slave of my desires. I will hate and destroy and annihilate and torture anyone who tries to stop me from becoming a slave of my lust and other people's desires!"

With these frightful threats, the young man of Dubai sauntered away. He entered a lavish store and brought toys and other indulgent materials, and from there, he headed to plush hotel, where thousands of local and foreign dancers and singers were engaged in the lewdest displays and acts. The man became engrossed in pleasing all those who were present, and he offered refreshment to the wealthy entrepreneurs who spent money in the ball room. He continued to speak harsh words about his faith and his Creator.

Just as the young man had promised, he encouraged all those present to shun prayers and fasting, and only enjoy this temporary life. He felt that the people who are sinless thought themselves to be great and honorable. It was for this reason that he hated them most violently and wanted to wage this unholy war against them. Using all his art of speech, he continually brainwashed his friends and companions in the parties and convinced them to sin regularly and to be proud of their sins. The man was only eighteen years old, but he was able to convince many people to sin constantly and persuaded people to insult anyone who tried to stop them from sinning.

Alas! Little did the youth know that those who gently admonished him and attempted to steer him to the path of righteousness, were not proud of their piety. He did not understand that the men who preached goodness to him were themselves most afraid of the uncertainty of the afterlife. These religious men were most frantically and most deadly afraid of accidentally committing a sin themselves. They thought that if they ever became proud of their chastity and honor, even for a moment, then this boon will be seized from them, for verily, it would take God only a second to make them like the sinful young man. Those sages and worshippers were most violently afraid of becoming enslaved to human lust and to become like those people who chase after desire and lust and grovel at the feet of other human beings.

The people who preached to this young man were the humble men who were devoutly religious and earnestly feared the wrath of their Lord. They had become insane with the fear of God and the uncertain future, and they desperately hoped that all those on earth should also worship the One God of Abraham and shun the slavery and obedience of unworthy creatures.

The greatest fear these religious men had was that God may not keep them pious up till the end of their lives, because they knew that God only lets the most honorable people in the world, the best-hearted people in the universe, to become pious, and they were afraid their hearts were not as pristine as to deserve the love and admiration of the Glorious Lord of Abraham.

So, they tried day and night most ardently to worship God and to stay as sinless as possible. They struggled to stay away from other human being's desires and lust.

They shunned the company of ordinary sinners, not because they despised them, but because they strived to become worthy in the eyes of God and hoped that God would see how much they were trying and would have mercy on them and grant them a status among His group of guided believers.

Amidst maddening parties and excessive indulgence, the young man's life began to ebb away, and his health started to wither. One after the another, ailments plagued his young body, and overindulging in intoxicants caused his liver and kidneys to malfunction.

Many of his relatives and friends were devoutly religious and they tried to come to his deathbed and make him repent but he was most adamant in his ignorance, his hate and his sin.

While he was dying, rather than summoning men of faith, he called for his partners in sin, and sent messengers to call them to his bed side. However, those youthful partygoers who danced and sang and remained engrossed in vile lusts of others, refused to answer to his pleas and ignored his beckon. He entreated those friends to come and see him one last time, as they always sinned together, but they were nowhere to be there and did not come near him.

Those youths were afraid of him and revolted by his incoming death. They enjoyed their youthful and lively lifestyles, and they were afraid of dying.

Those men and women wanted to live and continue in their sinful life.

They did not want to visit the bed side of a dying and sick man, because it was an unpleasant task. They all shrunk away from him.

The only people who surrounded his bedside were all his religious friends and families. They sat humbly next to him, and pleaded most rigorously and most desperately for him to repent to God and to start worshiping the merciful Creator and ask His forgiveness.

None of the entreaties had any desired effect. The eighteen-year-old young man was stubbornly insisting that there was not hereafter. He became more arrogant and more angry at God for making him sick. He blamed his weakly body on God, and complained bitterly to all those who visited him that he may not be able to walk out to those luxurious hotels and inns and sin freely as he did before.

As the youth of Dubai became more ill, and his health got progressively worse, his family members were resigned to the inevitable. They took him to the hospital but the doctor said it was too late and that he was on the verge of death.

With a heavy heart, the family learned that his illness was so severe that no one in the world could save him now.

After several more days of pain and grief, the youth died in his hospital bed. His distant family members send word to his home address and asked his father to come and see his son one last time. However, his father's wife was present in the family home, and she explained that the boy's father had been away on a business trip to Europe, and it would be a while before he could return to Dubai. She suggested that the family should not wait for the arrival of the father, and should proceed with the burial arrangement.

The young man from Dubai was dead and with his dying breath he called out onto his partners of sin and begged his family turn in loud lewd music. His distant family members gathered around him and cried out to God in humble and somber prayers. They bathed him, and wrapped him in clean shrouds, and buried him without waiting for his father to return. They held the funeral prayers and sought mercy for all the living and the dead. After the burial, the religious men all left with a heavy heart, overcome with fear and anticipation of what God might do to a sinful youth like him.

Two days later, the youth's father returned to Dubai and immediately heard about his only son's death. The relatives notified the father about what had transpired during the final days of his son's life, and they explained how the youth persistently refused to repent and eventually succumbed to his illness and died abruptly in the hospital.

Overwhelmed with shock, grief and disbelief, he rushed to the cemetery to visit the grave of his son.

Upon seeing the fresh mound of earth covering the place his only child was buried, the wealthy businessman fell to his knees in horrifying disbelief.

Running his hand tearfully over the dust, the father wept hysterically.

"Oh, my son! Oh, my own flesh and blood!" The father cried. "Indeed, I have wronged you, my child. I made a grievous mistake in leaving you and your mother and not ever coming to see you. I made the terrible mistake of not teaching you about God.

Oh, my son! Indeed, it was my fault when I sent you to school to get the best education in English, mathematics, geography and sciences, but had failed to teach you about God and the hereafter and the reality of afterlife and about sin and virtue. Who is to be blamed but me?

Oh, son of mine! Oh, flesh and blood of my own body! Indeed, it was my fault to have abandoned you to the horrible circle of your sinful friends and not take you with me. I should have preached to you, and taught you the Faith of Abraham, and should have raised you as a religious man. Indeed, it was my duty from God to have taught you about the Merciful God and to have taught you to fear God and love God. And I should have loved you myself. But, indeed,

in search of my own happiness, I had forgotten about you allowed you to do as you wished, and permitted you to freely follow your desires. Indeed, it was my fault that in order to make up for all my shortcomings, I tried to compensate it up by giving you unlimited money which you used to sin uncontrollably and destroy your body and your soul.

Oh, God of heaven and Earth! Forgive me! Pardon me for being the most horrible of father. For if my son had disobeyed the heavenly commandments, and had sinned, then verily, I am partly responsible, for I had not tried my best to make him God fearing and honorable. Indee, I have abused my right as a father by not teaching him about God, and enlightening his young mind about the hellfire, and about the reality of the heaven and about the importance of Your commandments and the distinction between right and wrong, the severe repercussions of sin and virtue. Indeed, I have not done my duty as a father. Indeed, I have been the most the undutiful father in this city."

Oh my son I have failed you!
I have failed my duties as a father!

After uttering these words, the youth's father fell face down on the grave, and he wailed aloud for his son. He called his son's name again and again and again, and wept unceasingly, not being able to believe that his young child, a boy of mere eighteen years, had departed from this earthly realm, and was resting beneath this damp dirt, under the dead leaves and cold twigs. He cried until he felt his tears would come no more.

"Oh, my son! Have you left me to be alone in this world?

My only child, have you abandoned me to the miseries of this mad mad world? Indeed, I was your father and I was supposed to die before you, but you have sinned and you have destroyed yourself and you have left this world before me. Oh, why did I outlive my son? Why did my child precede me in death?"

Saying these words, the father became extremely agitated in his weeping, and the echoes of his cries of grief could be heard from far and wide, until neighbors, well-wishers and other family members began to arrive at the cemetery, and seeing the father's pitiable condition, they begged him imploringly to leave the site of his son's burial.

One of the elderly relatives felt sympathy with the father, and he thought that if the father perhaps had one last glimpse of his son's face, then he would be able to cope with the grief in a more graceful manner.

The men held a conference and discussed if it was feasible to exhume the body of the freshly buried youth since it was barely buried 24 hours ago.

However, the father interrupted their meeting and wept profusely.

"Oh, people of Dubai! Have you buried my only son without letting me know? Have you thrown dust on my boy's face without letting me bid him goodbye?! Alas! I have not seen him in so long and yet you deprived me of burying my child?

Because I had remarried and hadn't had enough time to spend wit him have you thought me so cruel and heartless? You all thought I had loved my child any less?

Have you all thought I could bury him and send him to the afterlife forever without holding unto my bosom, my son , my only boy, my flesh and my blood one last time?

Did you not think I would want to hold my son and my lineage -in my arms one last time?

Would you let the earth take away my son from me forever without allowing me to give him a final farewell?

Oh, my heart is burnt and shattered into pieces!

Oh, my life does not feel worthwhile anymore!

My son has been taken away from me .

I was the father! I should have preceded him in death! I was so much older, it ought to have been me!

Oh, people! Dig out my child and let me hold him one last time for he is my birth son, my own extension and my heart's intimate portion.

Let me hold my son!

Let me hold him to my heart one last time!

Oh, let me say to him goodbye forever!

Do soothe the agony of a father's aching heart and the burning pain of my soul and let me bid my child a final goodbye for the last time." The father implored.

The relatives agreed that it was in everyone's interest to exhume the body of the youth and give closure to the heart of the grieving parent.

Perhaps, they had thought, for the last time, kissing the forehead of his son would make the father's heart more calm and his pain will be redeemed and his wailing will be softened.

Since it was only 19 hours that his son was buried, they knew that the body had not decomposed at all because it was a very wintery night and the day was bitter cold.

They called the grave diggers and informed them of the decision to open the grave so the father could offer his son one last goodbye.

Indeed, it was unjust of them to have buried a child so swiftly without the presence of his own father, the relatives thought.

They should have indeed waited for the father to return.

Verily, a father has the right to see his son.

Surely, a father has the right to say the last goodbye to the body of his departed son.

They knew that digging up a grave would be considered an abomination, but due to the emotional pleas of the father, the elderly men agreed to this course of action.

Many dreaded to visit a graveyard so soon after a burial because they knew that the cemetery was a place where the souls of many a bodies of both the virtues and sinners were destined to remain forever.

The men all crossed to the shed near the cemetery where shovels and pitchforks and scythes hung unused and each reached for a large rake, and detoured around a heavy canopy of spiderwebs and headed to the freshly covered grave. The father looked weak with apprehension, and he tried to hold

back his tears. He struggled to muster up an appropriate amount of zeal and courage so that onlookers would not notice his inner state and fright.

The father told the rest of the relatives to stand at a distance as he wanted to meet his dead son in a personal manner.

He carefully unearthed the dust, and cleared the earth over the coffin.

When the father lifted the lid from the coffin, and took off the white shroud from the face of his son, he gave an excruciatingly loud shrill of a scream and fainted.

When he came back to his senses, he screamed again so loudly that the entire graveyard shook with the horror of his scream.

The sheer pain in his voice vibrated the air around him and the people nearby hurried towards him and inquired what was happening.

"I was digging the grave of my son!" The father screamed and screamed and fainted in his utter madness and disbelief.

The relatives and well-wishers who were there were greatly alarmed and thoroughly disturbed by his reaction, and they quickly lifted the father to help him to his senses and to calm him down, but as they approached the opening of the grave, they were stricken by unspeakable bewilderment. They found out the reason for the father's fright and insane pain.

The setting sun provided scarcely enough crimson glow for the relatives to see the horrifying state of the dead youth's face.

And yet, it was a severe shock to all of them.

The smell of burnt meat burned their nostrils as they tried their best to ignore the flies and maggots surrounding the body.

All they could focus on was the youth's face, which looked petrified, but his eyes were wide open and glaring into nothingness. His skin had taken on a gray, almost translucent color and a thin veneer of moss seemed to cloak his eyeballs. Despite his frozen eyes, and cold, hard face, he was very recognizable to all his relatives, and mostly, to his father.

The father gazed tearfully at his dead son's cold, gray pallor and noticed that the twilight had highlighted the red burnt wounds of various sizes all over his face and arms. Onlookers were able to see the youth's drug-stained teeth through a gaping hole of his mouth, which was frozen in an eternal scream.

The air around the exhumed grave felt chilly, and the rotten air crawled on the nape of the father's neck. His son's usual slick black hair had transformed into clumps of gray and white hair.

The boy looked like he was at least 99 years of age. His hair had become white and his face was burnt and wrinkled as if he were at least a hundred years of age.

The shock was too severe for those who had given him the burial shower and was present in the funeral home because he looked absolutely young healthy and his face and his skin were young spotless, uninjured just 19 hours ago.

The weeping father could not utter one word.

In his deep shock and insane madness, he was overcome by his pain and hurt.

"NO! By God! This is not my son!" The father in his shock screamed.

So agonizing was were his wailings that almost every single person around him wept most bitterly along with him

And for hours, this was the only word that he screamed as he was fainting and regaining his senses, and each time he fainted, he whimpered, "This cannot be my son! By God No, it cannot be! It cannot be!"

Jutting from the front of his face like a goiter, his features resembled a malformed skull, which hung at a strange angle. A thick gray tongue lolled from his mouth and the gaping eyes on the dead, wrinkled face looked petrifyingly alert.

The young man's once robust body frame now looked like a scarecrow. His eyes were affixed in an eternal horror as if he was staring at some cruelest torturer in front of him.

"Oh, people of Dubai! Oh, the merciful God of heaven! Bring back my son's soul to me! Cried the father in his madness!

Bring me back my boy! Bring me back my child!" The father screamed in such horror that the hair of the body of every man that was present in the graveyard stood straight at the sight of the insane madness and hysterical screaming of the youth's father.

The erratic actions and bereaved behavior of the father caused those present to become overwhelmed with pity and fear. They were too afraid to come near and most of them remained frozen in their places, staring at the father and knowing not what to do or where to stare.

The father continued to scream.

"Oh, my son! Oh, my dearest child! What has happened to you? What has happened to my own flesh and blood?"

No one proffered any reply. They too wept bitterly after seeing the father's pitiful state.

The events of the day had been a bloody, traumatic blur which none of them wished to ever recollect.

The eighteen-year-old youth's father was the first to behold the scene of death, and at once, he felt gooseflesh pop on his forearms.

The evening was still and little bright, but the setting sun had done nothing to heat the cold air, and had kept the earth hard.

The father blinked back tears, and again, gently lifted the shroud from his dead son's face. Mustering all his strength and hope, He then again peered inside. Rather than seeing his boy's youthful face, he saw an elongated eyelid which revealed an orb marred by a crisscrosses of blood red veins. The young man's iris had rolled too far back and his skin was lined heavily, as though he had aged astronomically. The father stifled a gasp, but dread filled him up inside like an overfull water pitcher.

He lost consciousness again and cried on to those around him that this was not his son and begged them to tell his the truth about his son.

They assured him that no one had died or were buried that whole week and that this was indeed his son.

He heaved a shaky breath and then took the dead youth's limp, useless fingers and lifted his death covered hand and gave them a gentle squeeze. But to his horror, the youth's hands were heavily wrinkled, resembling the skin of an eighty-year-old man.

The father screamed a great wail, and cried out, "Oh, my boy! My boy!" Again, he cried, "Oh, Lord! My boy! Oh, my child, and my baby! Oh, my son!" The father screamed until his voice came out no more and he started choking violently in his rage of maddening wailing and weeping. "Oh, God! Take me away! Take me away from this life! I do not want to live anymore! Take my soul away, as you have taken my son! Take my soul away and send back my son so he could have more time to repent!"

After regaining the strength to use his voice, the father again shrieked. "Oh, that I were never born!

Oh, that I would have been childless and barren!

Oh, the God of the heavens and earth! Do not hate me!

My Lord! Do not be angry at my son!

Oh, Creator of my soul! Why did you make me?" The father cried raising his face to the starry skies.

"Creator and maker of my soul! Why did you create me?

Why did you send me down to this sinful earth?

Why did you give me so much wealth and honor?

Take it all! My Lord, take everything away and soothe my heart by forgiving my boy!

Oh, Lord, that I were dead!" And he kept repeating these sad words with such ferocity that some people around him started fearing for his well-being as the father was inconsolable.

Those present fought to remain calm and present a composed expression, but the younger men and women coughed and gagged when they saw the frightful corpse. They fought back the bitter burning taste that filled their mouth and when one of the elderly men tried to speak, his raw throat spasmed with a coughing fit. For a long time, no one spoke. No one could move. They had been glued to their places from what seemed like hours, until the young man's father again shrieked in desperate grief.

"Oh, God! What have I done?

My lord! What have I done to my son?!

Why had I allowed him to sin?

Why had I given him money which he was able to squander?

If he was physically sick would I not force him to take medicine or surgery?!

Oh then why didn't I force him to stay away from sins and from degrading himself?

Why had I not taught him enough about religion and righteousness and the difference between right and wrong?!"

He looked into the coffin and again, he cried. "Oh, God, would that I was never born!" The young man's father gasped. His heart jumped when he beheld the scene.

His heart pounded when he saw the dead body of his young boy, and terror stabbed his heart like a million burning knives.

The father trembled in sheer agony and glances at the deceased body of his young boy and wailed tearfully.

"Oh, my boy! My dearest boy!

Oh, my child! Your beloved father is here! And he will beg for your forgiveness."

Then he raised his tear-stained face, and glared at the onlookers.

"Hear this! I will not bury my son!" He shouted in his lamentations. "From henceforth, my boy will remain over the ground! I shall destroy you if you bury him!"

"Oh, you unfortunate grieving father!" Several of the elderly men cried. "Will you then burn your son? For if you do not bury him, his soul will not be able to leave his bodily abode and your son will feel the burning agony of the fire for eternity and if you cremate him willingly then he will feel the pain the way he would feel it if he were alive!"

The father blinked in anguish. "Oh, God! Why did you give me a son?" He began to wail anew. "Why had not You taken my soul away before he was born?!"

Then he clutched the hem of the elderly religious man and cried, "Say! Oh, man of God! Tell me, why has my son become white-haired? Why has his skin turned into wrinkled masses? Why has this fate befallen my son? Pray, I ask you to tell me the truth!"

The elderly pious man spoke softly. "Have you not read the words of your God, when he spoke to the children of men in the Final Testament?"

The father looked bewildered and shook his head wildly.

The pious man explained that when a person dies, his soul is transported to the hereafter, even though his physical body remains visible to the kith and kin. If the person had lived a life of righteousness, angels in heavenly attire transport the soul to a garden in heaven. If the person lived a life of lustful indulgence and sins, then frightful looking angels of torment seize his soul and shows him his abode in the raging hellfire. The sight is so petrifying that all those who witness it become mad with fear, and those who are young, age so quickly, that they resemble old men. Then the man read the verse from the Final Testament: " If you disbelieve, a Day that will make the children white-haired? The heavens shall rend asunder thereby, and God's promise is ever brought to fulfillment." (Chapter 73: Verse 17)

The father knew that his son did not obey the commandments of the Merciful God of Abraham. The young man had lived a life of sin. He had harbored specific grudge against the religious men of Dubai. All those present knew that the youth was a marionette of his peers, contorting when they pulled the strings and speaking canned lines fed to him by his sinful friends. The cemetery was deathly silent. All eyes remain affixed on the exhumed body of the eighteen-year-old man whose sunken face now resembled the features of a centenarian. The protruded eyes which had once shone with life were now staring in deadly fright, wide-eyed into the unseen.

The youth's father, along with his relatives and other influential men of Dubai was still standing astride the oldest frontier in the mortal world, the frontier that has separated living civilizations from the bygone ones. This was surreal because the frontier of the cemetery existed between two areas of reciprocal incomprehension, and to witness the reality of both was akin to commuting between different planetary systems. The sensible man's inability to understand the land of the dead was matched by his incapacity to understand the reality of the grave. Those wise men who stood astride the frontier were soon to find themselves obliged to act as interpreters between two different worlds, and explain to the frightened onlookers what horror had overcome the dead young man.

One middle-aged man who looked into the coffin shuddered involuntarily. His heart leaped into his throat and he could feel his heart hammering in his chest. He opened his mouth to speak but no sound came out.

They all knew that the youth had led a life of indulgence and his disdain for God and religion was trumped only by his contempt for the religious men who encouraged him to leave the company of those sinful friends who always manipulated and misled him.

His life of indulgence did not provide peace or happiness, even during his own short lifetime, and neighbors often saw that he spent the entire night vomiting into a bucket in the back of his luxurious vehicles, and when he looked at himself in the mirror, he must've saw a man with a dead soul.

Before the sun went down completely, and star ceased to glow on the unmoved heaven, the people who were present gave one last look at the grave. When they glanced at the youth's wrinkled face, and his wildly strewn white hair, their hearts froze in fear.

Shivers ran up their spine, making some of them crumple to the ground, and breaking into terrifying tears.

Some of the younger men wailed and expressed disbelief with maddening cries.

A few men felt their heart stop briefly and they were afraid that they would die out of fear.

This was surreal. The sight of the boy all of them had buried with their own hands less than a day before was not something anyone could have anticipated. When they had buried him just 20 hours ago , his body was perfectly healthy looking , young and fresh and perfect, and how could He change so much in so little time and that too after death?

It had been 21 hours that the boy had been dead, and within this brief period, he had transformed from a young healthy man into an old man, with petrifying wide-eyes that were affixed at an unknown frightful object.

Many of the young men of Dubai shook in horror, and they kneeled in terror, begging forgiveness of God while crying most profusely.

What they had thought was the impossible had not only become possible, it had happened; and the wise and religious figures among them offered grave and great insight was on what the reality of the next life was like, and once more, the youth's relatives reminded themselves how they themselves were at

least partly to blame for the sins of the young man, because they had not exhausted their faculties and patience in trying to discourage him from engaging in lustful and sinful behavior. He was destined to die in vice and disgrace, and in guilt, he had suffered from the humiliation of defeat and subjection of the unseen world after death.

Fear paralyzed all those who were present in the graveyard. The eighteen-year-old youth was lying in pitifully frightening position, dead beyond doubt and utterly frightful, with protruded eyes affixed to the heavens. All those present screamed over and over in shock.

The youth's half brother stood silently, wallowing in grief. He recalled the advice he had attempted to impart to his younger brother. He remembered how he implored the teen to abandon his sinful ways, but the young boy never listened. Now, standing over his dead body, the older brother felt fresh guilt encompassing him. Perhaps, he should have tried harder to persuade his little brother. Perhaps, there was more he could have done. The young man's brother was in a complete state of panic. He could feel nothing but blind terror and his legs were wobbly with fear.

He saw the corpse of his younger brother glaring up, and touched the body lightly. The deceased boy's hands were cold and clammy.

The older brother suppressed tears of anguish as his heart was weighed down by dread and fresh apprehension twisted in his gut.

One of those who were present in the graveyard was the youth's sinful friends who always accompanied him in hard parties and served wine to sinful guests all night. That young man was standing nearest to the body and he feared that this might be his fate as well, and in a sudden terror, he sped away from the scene, and dread mounted with every step and he fought a rising panic in his heart.

Fresh fear tormented his brain and burned his heart as he ran and ran, trying to place as much distance between him and the damned corpse.

For the men and women of Dubai who were present at the graveyard, the earthly mortal world became utterly clear and evidently morbid. The past and future no longer mattered to the scores of men and women who were witnessing the frightful scene. The putrid smell of death hung in the air while relatives of the deceased youth wailed in anguish. This was more intimidating than a common funeral, more deadly than a pier on fire, and more unheralded than wanton execution. The dead body before them bore witness to the reality of the afterlife, spoke volumes of the terror of the grave and served as a warning to the multitudes of heedless people who were present.

The callous dust of the waiting graves that enveloped each body, treated all its occupants alike, and made distinction between belief and unbelief only. It was indeed the most fundamental of all possible distinctions, which determined if a person had been righteous or sinner, if he was an aggressor or victim. Now, the physical level of the hereafter was clear to all, and once that which was the sole differentiator between a believer and an apostate. Now, there was difference between the sighted and the blind. Everyone present had witnessed the unthinkable and they had seen what truly happens after a man's demise.

Those who did not believe in the afterlife were woefully ignorant of the reality, and were seeing, yet blind, and just as no wise man would ever seek an adequate description of a landscape from a blind person, even if that man completed a scientific study of its topography and analyzed the nature of its rocks and vegetation, no one who did not witness the body of the dead youth could comprehend the frightful experience it had.

The relatives and onlookers were confounded by the shock of this scene, and they glanced again and again into the coffin. Each time, they looked into the youth's aged face, and wild white hair, they nearly fainted.

Some of them exclaimed, "Woe unto us! We cannot believe that this is the youth we buried! This cannot be our boy! He was of a very young age and this body that we see must belong to someone who is over 100 years of age!"

All the relatives and the father watched as their relative who passed away hours earlier became unrecognizable. His face looked horrid, and he had become old and most wrinkly with all the hair of his head and the eyebrows and eyelashes became white, His shoulder was bent as if the body had aged 100 years in the matter of 19 hours.

The father's vehement insistence that the old faced man was not his son caused the local hospital to send in their finest doctors and nurses. The men of science ran several sophisticated DNA tests to prove that the boy was indeed the son of the wailing father. Dental records also matched so their s no doubt after the blood report and DNA result came in. However, none of the physicians were able to find any explanation as to why he had aged so prematurely to an ancient age after death , after which common aging process stops. Despite their medical certificate showing that the old-looking man was indeed the eighteen-year-old youth who had died the previous day, the father continued to shout. "No, this cannot be my son! It cannot be my son!"

The father looked around and cried. "Listen! My son was a young boy and this is an old man!" The father was crying and wailing and begging to God for forgiveness for his son T the same time for inside he knew it was indeed his son. The people of Dubai heard his lamentations and accompanied him to the place of worship every day. They all tried relentlessly to calm down the father.

Within bouts of sorrow and mournfulness, the boy's father only recalled the words of the Final Testament which attested to the fact that men will age in terror. God warned his creation with the following words: "Then how can you fear, if you disbelieve, a Day that will make the children white- haired? The heavens shall rend asunder thereby, and God's promise is always fulfilled." (Chapter 73: Verse 17)

But thinking along these lines caused the father to become uncontrollably hysterical in his wailing and weeping and he addressed those gathered him, and announced:

"By God! And by the One in whose Hand my life! This cannot be my son. I demand that you summon all the doctors and get all the nurses and get his pictures to be appraised and vetted. Perchance, my young son had been swapped with another person. Perhaps, an old man was buried in his place." Once more, the physicians came and took the boy and examined his body which looked like a very old man.

They carried the body to the lab this time and tested him with different chemicals and they found out that it was indeed the very same corpse that belonged to his son.

But no rational words could halt his father's uncontrollable bouts of wailing. The father knew that it was indeed mentioned in the Final Testament, that God would make those who disbelieved in Him and His religion, those who mocked His commandments and indulged in sin and debauchery and used and abused others honor for sinful acts would be petrified with fright in the afterlife, and they will be consumed with such fear that the youth among them would age drastically and their hairs would turn white".

The pious man who led prayers at the place of worship was the man who led the funeral prayers of the boy. He came along to the site of the exhumed grave, and when the whole story was related to him, he himself saw the aged, white-haired corpse of the young boy, and called everyone and instructed them to gather around.

"Indeed, this is the truth which God sometimes shows to his creation!" He declared. "Each one of you should start begging God for forgiveness. Repent oh youths repent today from every vile sin and start living the life of virtue and honor! Oh youths of this world! Death is blinded to age. Those who are to die young are old and those old people who are to live even longer are still young so repent and do not think your youth hood will protect you from the clutches of death!

Repent from all your sins and take this chance that God has given you to ask forgiveness of yourself and your relatives who had passed away. Indeed, it is a sign from God and the wrath of God which God shows only to a few in this world. This youth we buried had sinned all his life most grievously and most viciously. It is possible that he sinned against the commandments of God. He publicly professed that he hated God because he was angry and jealous at the good people. Since he thought he had no hope of receiving the mercy of God, the man gave up on God so quickly and when he started sinning without any fear of God and spent unlimited money which his father provided on unholy actions, he ended up dying in the midst of indulging most viciously and violently in his sins.

Oh people I beg you not to destroy your eternity of the hereafter for the pleasure of a few days of this world!

Oh people the people you sin with will be the first and foremost to hate you and leave you when death takes over you!

Heed my advice oh people of this modern world! Do not think your smart phone and social media profiles and expensive cars can save you from death or the horrors of hell fire!

Oh people do not be so unwise and blinded by hate and passion that you become obsessed with this short temporary life and spent your precious moments sinning and lusting and hating! Indeed death is near! Death is true! The heaven and hell of god is true ! Oh people even if it weren't true still do not take such risks and threaten to destroy your own life for the enjoyment of a few meager moments of this accursed modern world where the street lights and the pictures and movies and food and lust fools you into thinking that you will not die!

Oh people I only beg you to help yourself ! Nothing will I gain if you were to be saved and would go to heaven so heed my advice and do not be angry at me nor declare a war against me for stopping you from indulging in sins!

As the religious man spoke, the people who gathered around were silent and earnest.

The man continued to exhort them: "Oh, people of Dubai! Indeed, the moment this youth's eyes were shut in death, and he was laid to rest in the grave, two angels appeared before him to ask him of God and his life in this world. However, due to his sinful past, he had forgotten the answer. And the angels therefore opened the pit of hellfire for his soul to witness till the day of Resurrection. Although he died from this earthly world, his soul was returned to his body for a duration of the questioning, so in a way, he was dead to the world but alive to the angels who were questioning him. When this youth saw the hellfire and the horrifying forms of the angels of torment who were interrogating him, he could not contain his unimaginable fear and that terror caused him to age prematurely. His dread caused his eyebrows and hair to become white, and upon seeing his own punishment, his beard became white due to extreme worry and agitation. His concern and fear after seeing the punishment that was to come to him in the eternal hereafter made him bent with age. After seeing the reality of the hellfire and after life. even his skin became wrinkled and he prematurely aged, making him look like 90- or 100-year-old man. This youth looked petrified. As we all saw, his eyes were affixed over his head, and a look of unimaginable terror seized his face when he first saw the angels of torment. Every muscle on his face was taut and he looked as though he had witnessed the most frightful scenery in the world."

After the religious man delivered his speech, the father was inconsolable in his grief for his only son.

He remained above his son's grave for days and wept to the God of Abraham uncontrollably and begging God to forgive his son, and his son's innumerable sins.

The lamenting father wept and implored: "Oh, my Lord! Forgive my son, for indeed he was a rebellious soul. Oh, God of the heavens and the Earth and the controller of the fate of humans! Have mercy on my son and forgive him and all the sins that he did. Overlook all the methods in which he disobeyed You and hated You." Saying these words, the father cried so much that the people

around him feared that he may also die and pass away from this world due to his unbearable pain and uncontrollable wailing.

The shock of seeing his son so dauntingly changed and so unrecognizable within the matter of hours caused him to go into a severe shock from which he never ever elapsed.

The youth of the area were so shocked and so aghast and so moved by this event, that they could not believe what had happened to the eighteen-year-old boy who had been partying until a week before his death.

The people of Dubai could not believe the reality of the afterlife and gradually, they all tried to change their errant ways and learned such a reflective lesson from him as to try and avoid lustful desires and nor ever be obsessed with sinning and making others sin. They all understood the dangers in worshipping other people and making unclean people -worship and enslave themselves to fellow flawed mortals. They realized the futility of lusting after other filthy humans who would also have to die one day.

The exhumed grave was a testament to the reality of this world, and to the temporality of this life which was so useless, so short and so meaningless that their heart had become steeled in shock and fear, as they all became restless and agitated due to the severe concern of their own hereafter.

Life in this unkept earth was temporary and love of this world -the lust of the humans in it was the cause of all evil. They saw how the deceased youth was destroyed by worshipping vile and sinful humans of this world.

All the joys and sorrow were meant to end one day. All the sadness of this world, all the happiness of this world, all the richest of this world, all the boredom of this world, all the smallness of this life and unsurety of this world, was temporary, and it finally dawned upon them that no one in this world would live forever.

And yet, careless youths loved one another, and lusted after each other like madmen, and became jealous of their lovers in this world as if they would live here forever, as though their lovers would live here in this world forever, as if their lover's love for them would make any difference in this life or the next, and as if their love for their lover would make any difference in this world or the hereafter.

Upon seeing the frightful condition of his body, the youth's friends and his relatives and the people of that City fell into such shock and grief that they all vowed to change their lifestyle. As the wailing of the father continued to be heard from miles away, no one in the whole city ever recovered from the shock and everyone in that City changed their lifestyle and started fearing the one eternal God that send them to this world and to the God to whom they have to return one day.

The people of the boy's family never sinned after that, because they found no happiness in sinning.

They found no happiness in drinking wine; they found no happiness in chasing after a lust and temporariness of the love of this world; they no longer spend time with their friends nor on useless relationships of the temporary world; but instead they spend their life and their time helping those who were in need and they encouraged others to worship God and they themselves prayed

to God at night and cried unto him during the day in fear of the uncertainty of their afterlife and their trials in the dark and lonesome grave.

None of his friends and none of his relatives and none of his neighbors ever found any happiness or any comfort in the luxury of this world.

All they feared and all they saw and all they thought of was their final destination in the grave and what punishment might befall them in their grave.

They wondered what punishment might come to them because of their own sins and what terror the youth of Dubai must have faced that made him age so prematurely.

Was his pride, his arrogance or his wealth of his lovers any use to him now in his grave when he was as helpless as the time before he was born?

The mother's womb was much like the grave for one has no power or control over it? The child in the womb cannot see the outside world but the world beyond the mother's body knows that a child is in it.

Infants in the womb may sometimes think that there is no life beyond the womb and similarly, the people who are alive today think that there is no life beyond the grave.

The people outside the grave think that the dead bodies are all sleeping and lying down but the people inside the grave can see that their life has just begun. They can witness the soul of their life being examined and judged.

No luxury of this world, no lover of this world, no power of this world, no wealth of this world and no friends of this world could ever help a dead man in his grave because they could never stop him from being punished for his own sins.

None of the weapons and guards of the world could ever stop the wrath of God from descending upon him. God's wrath is sometimes as durable as his love.

And God's anger is the proof that he loved man, because had he not loved man, he would not have been angry if they sinned against him; if they disobeyed him; and if they hated him.

The anger of God is the proof and the punishment of God is the proof that God had once loved the sinners a lot and had tried through his Messengers and holy books and prophets to go to the people and preach the straight path of truth.

He sent down the prophets to go to people and teach them about the love of God, so that they would love God back in return and stop torturing themselves and indulging in sins and forcing and brainwashing others to indulge in lust and self-desire.

So many people hated other people, tortured other people, insulted and abused other people in this world as if they would live on forever. But few ever realized that any minute, any second, the axe of death will descend and would seize them whether they hid in the strongest fort, or resided in the most luxurious palace.

Death was such a formidable foe, that if someone tried to hide from it, it would find them.

If someone tried to run away from death, it would overpower them.

If someone took the best medication, they would still die in the appointed time. For no one in the world could escape the fatal clutches of death.

Nothing else in the world was as sure as death.

The world is a sea of uncertainty, and no one can be sure that they will live until the next day.

No one can be sure that their spouse will love them the next day.

No one can be sure that their family will live up to the next day.

No one can be certain that their parents would love them the next day.

But everyone could be sure and everyone should be sure that death will be here any minute today, or the day after. Whether the day of their death be now or a long time later is irrelevant, but the only thing in this world that is indisputable is that death will come for all, and will spare none, both young and the old, both the king and his subject, both the wealthy and destitute, both the sinner and pious, both the scholar and the peasant.

When Guilt broke the Angel of Death's Heart

JUNE 1988:

What is the truth, not what I would like the truth to be, or what would my colleagues, or country like to hear? War was ugly and brutal. Even innocent bystanders were often hit by stray rounds of bullet, which passed through a victim's body unimpeded, leaving a gaping exit wound, or shattering and breaking through in different places before hitting an unintended target nearby, and such was the reality of the war that ravaged Iran during the eighties.

The never-ending gentle current of Persia's rivers allowed all emotions to drift along effortlessly, and the glassy surface of the rivers would only be broken from the splash of aerial bombardment that pounded the civilian sectors of the city.

The monument of loss stood like an archway of despair, in the centre of a bustling city where each intertwining tree limb painted a vision of confounded sorrow of the deceased.

Beneath the grass, under the leaves, lay the dead with forgotten names, and heavy stones crushing them to their doom, and dust entangled with broken ribs, the dead are unaware of the golden sunlight shining over them, and have no sense of time or history. Neither would they ever know when night falls or when the moonlight filters over the hills of Isfahan and like an ivory arch shimmer through the city skies.

It seemed as though death was following in their footsteps, as the nation tediously hastened on through the perilous war, where warriors with heart of steel tried to overcome the fear of death, and while no one heeded the noiseless step of the angels of death, they each suffered sudden and overwhelming blow and perished from this realm. One million of Persia's most vibrant sons perished in this war, and millions more may be dead in the coming years. Men have become nearly extinct from their land, and the enemy was sadly conscious of his presence and power and relentlessly violated the honour of the women in Persia and slayed their male folks without discrimination.

The governance of the city had taken an alarming appearance, and since war was fast approaching, with all its terrors, she became eager to engage in the cause of her country with all the ardour of patriotism. She was not in the military, nor had any formal training, but duties of her life drew her from home.

The administration was still hamstrung by a desperate cash shortage. Even the remedy of increasing manpower via a mandatory draft and levying fines on those who refused to cooperate further exacerbated the government difficulties with its increasingly restless and suffering subjects. Persia was doomed to suffer a painful defeat should the war go on for another year, as a million of their boldest and bravest youths had perished, and not too many males were still living in their midst, and homes bereft of men became the prey of the predatory enemies, who took advantage of the women's helplessness and dishonoured towns after towns.

It was this war with a neighbouring country, that stripped all parties of their humanity so quickly that casual indifference to death and grief becomes the new norm, but the sisters was horrified to see the womenfolk of their country suffer from such dire degradation. She lamented that her township of ruined like a rotten canvas, where each day, the numbers of sick increased and around half died. Hundreds of wounded men returned from the battle front lines, most suffering from ghastly burns and mortal wounds. People in Persian villages no longer had the privilege of burying them separately but were forced to move on to a form of gloomy industry, digging great yawning pits where the dead, huddled in sack-like anonymity, were laid in fated rows: men, women, and the few children who died each day from bombs and war-related sanctions and diseases, were heaped together, to depart from this earth in an orderly but impersonal fashion. The dead themselves were a community of the forsaken where occasionally, entire families were buried at a time, and piles of dead strangers, all concealed beneath unmarked shrouds. The wave of death never stopped, and neither did the notices from the War office which demanded all men to report to their nearest recruiting station to train for battle.

When this bold young woman showed up, the office clerks were surprised. Daily bombing runs had caused much harm to their cities and destroyed the delicate ecosystem of their irrigated coastal towns and the terraces of

the fertile counties of Isfahan. It was through those ecosystems that the arduous enemy infantry marched during their attacks on Persian lands, and with each raid, they marked the path with death and doom, leaving behind them only desolation and social unrest and regional conflict. Local defenders who had retreated to the hilltops watched in helpless anguish as the enemy marched and they tried to scramble down the thousand-foot cliffs into the city proper, where the population found that the gap between defeat and occupation was very narrow, and not only were their fertile lands damaged, but the occupiers had coordinated an orgy of looting and destruction prior to leaving.

Elsewhere in the city, battle continued all day, and the combatants, like pained and drunk fighters, lurched into the open field, careless of caution and cover, as they made one last feeble attempt to prevent the enemy from overtaking their homeland.

Formation of seasoned fighters rushed about and screams and shouted orders bellowed in the dense-packed melee. This was more than a war; it was the wind of death deluging this ancient and historic city with searing sadness. No one was spared. No one had anywhere to run. Technology was not a friend to these fighters, as bullets in crudely assembled guns ran out, and men often resorted to using axes, mallets and fought fiercely in that stricken place, trying to avoid the lethal thrust of daggers from the enemy. Darkness brought no relief, as aerial bombarding continued well into midnight, and shattered rooftops and ruined homes were commonplace. The crushed cobbled streets were littered with debris from the fight, and in the aftermath of the crude battle, the streets were occasionally awash with gore and spilt entrails, leaving vestiges of many a man who slipped unceremoniously away from the realm of the living.

The men were dying in such large numbers that the newer weapons, ordnance and handguns, which were deployed by the government factories were left lying uselessly in the warehouses, alongside protective gears and masks.

Although modern warfare was crude and calculated, where guns with hair triggers added insensible cruelty to the demonic fury of battle with their diabolical roars, but it enabled men to fight from afar, making the scene of war less personal.

Smoke and dust belched out from every crevice of the building and vast clouds of the corrosive air were fiercely whipping and eddying in the breeze, one minute obscuring her vision, then lifting as though with the parting of a veil.

Amidst semi-professional muses and revelry, the stranger maintained a most singular and unseasonable gravity. Her countenance assumed a deeper cast of despair as each restless moment passed, and casual conversation from other visitors, rather than cheering her, seemed only to render her the more morose and melancholy.

"I must fight. Women must fight for freedom to observe faith and be religious," the woman said sharply, pacing across the floor. "Our men are dead, and the enemies will soon seize upon this and enter our nation and drive all faithful out. Don't you realise that the mosque where you sit all day will be no more if the enemy wins, because they will ban all religious relics and buildings, and the very mobs who we see today, will be turned against faith, until they drag you and all religious clerics like you out of the worship places. There is only one way to ensure our freedom, and that is by allowing women to fight for their own faith and their own freedom."

At times, she seemed lost in troublesome thoughts, as though something close to home was disturbing her very existence. She once more was lost in thought and did not reply. There was a perturbed look on her face, and a keenness of her eye which bespoke a mind ill at ease.

She spoke firmly with the clerk of the office, and attempted to convince the men that her demands were just and legitimate. As she made her case, her conversations with the bureaucrats became more and more earnest and tenacious.

In a mechanical tone, the clerk repeated his answer, and assured her that no woman would be allowed to join active combat, and would not be required to serve in the frontlines, as per the government policies.

She raised her voice slightly, and protested, as the fair calmness of her brow became visibly agitated, and tremors ran through her tender frame.

Her strained voice and grave expression were so conspicuous that it could not escape the notice of the men seated behind the clerk's desk.

When she held out the partially torn pale blue slip in her slender hands, no one moved. None of the office workers made any effort to reach for the slip of paper which was suspected from her trembling fingers.

They waited for her to speak, wondering what could have brought this rather well-spoken high-born woman in their war office headquarters. They may have wondered if she was a woman mourning the loss of her loved one, but her youthful face was not marred by tears and neither did she appear old enough to have a spouse or child to be active in this current warfare.

Several of the office workers went about their duties, and tried to engage in small talks and shared candied fruits and pickles with one another, but the young woman dropped the draft notice on the clerk's table with the finality of a funeral knell.

The people in the army recruiting office looked mildly alarmed by her movement. Their cheerfulness was chilled by the baffling gloom of the young woman who now stood directly before the desk clear and demanded to speak with the person in charge of this entire department.

Something in her words affected their bearings, but the workers stubbornly refused to consider her request.

When she made it clear that she wanted to train for combat and join the military to defend her nation, a number of whispers and glances were interchanged in the office, and men muttered under their breaths. It was the official policy for all men who did not have an apparent physical or mental disability, nor was under financial dependency of the parents to volunteer to serve in the armed forces, while all women, children and elderly faced exemption from the draft. There have been traditional avenues of evasion, for those who were priests, clergymen, or were involved in transportation, computer operators, mail carriers or those who worked in mines and foundries, or were educational specialists like college personnel or teachers of the handicapped.

"But my fifteen-year-old cousin himself perished in the army. Our children, young as they are, are forging their ages, and entering the armed services prematurely, and dying in their prime, when they should have been home with the family." She protested.

"Yes, we have a draft system in place to prevent the wrong people or ineligible category of people to enter, but unfortunate modes and instruments are required to raise an army and those administering the draft realise that the system in place is less than ideal, but they knew that they must live with it. In most Persian cities, all eligible men were required to report to a county or federal building in their community for registration. But when this procedure did not yield the ideal results, the government adopted the practice of sending enrolling officers into the cities and villages to locate and register all the eligible young men. Not only was it difficult to find such people or to register them when they were found, but the primitive character of the roads and transportation facilities at these remote Persian villages made the task of an enrolling officer a trying one. Eventually, the clerks decided to send out draft notices to eligible men, hoping they would respond and do their duty for God and country."

Their curious comments were accompanied by dubious shakes of the head. It was obvious that they thought this young woman was not sensible in her dreams or demands.

The occasional entertaining chuckle and humourless laughs grew less and less frequent as she spoke in a steely manner.

In vain, she tried to persuade the men to listen to her demands, and during the dreary pauses in the conversation, the young woman became more dismal.

The office clerk listened to the woman's story with profound attention. He kept his eyes steadily fixed on her, and as her brief statement drew to a close, began gradually to rise from his seat, and offered his heartfelt condolences for the young woman's losses but reiterated his previous stance.

The woman was not easily dissuaded and heaved a deep sigh, declaring that it was hardly fair for them to deny her the right to defend her nation.

The old man took a solemn farewell of the company and hurried after the woman who had already exited the hall.

"Is there no one among your male family members, who are alive?"

Unable to speak, she shook her head mournfully, seeming too distressed utter a coherent phrase.

There was something in her reply and the tone in which it was uttered that made the recruiting officer's heart soften for a moment, but he brushed aside his feelings, and rallied his stubbornness, repeating his unwelcoming mandate.

The stranger shook his head silently, but positively, at every offer,

The young woman once more shook her beautiful head, and repeated her offer, and upon receiving the same reply, she grimaced visibly, and without waving a farewell to the people in the office, she stalked hurriedly out of the hall.

For a moment, she hung her head in frustration, and a tear stole to her eye, but her brief moment of mourning was over, and a new zeal and fierce determination overtook her heart, and she demanded that women like her be permitted to fight in a battle that had already claimed a million lives.

The old man walked with wobbled steps but followed the strange woman to the great court of the main building, and noticed her walking hurriedly away with impatience.

When they had reached the portal of the building houses, the woman paused briefly, before marching purposely into the bright daylight, where

hundreds of automobiles were rushing by. The young woman headed to an overpass, where beneath the deep archway that was dimly lighted by the noonday shadows, her car was parked.

She made to enter her vehicle, and settled behind the wheel, when the old man rushed ahead to catch up with her. His withering silvery beard flowed as he leaned on his walking stick and approached the woman's car. Raising his cane to his waist, the old man rapped on the driver-side door, and motioned for the woman to lower the window.

"My child, I am an old man, who worked in this office for fifty years, and in my lifetime, I witnessed many wars and saw civilisations rise and fall. Your appearance at the recruitment office was a shock to me, and I worried that you may do something rash. Now that we are alone here, say, why have you come to volunteer for combat, when you are but a young girl, who should be content in the safety and shelter of her home."

The woman paused, and addressed the old man in a hollow tone of voice, which the vaulted enclosure of her vehicle rendered still more sepulchral.

"I will impart to you the reason of my demands, for I firmly believe that I must do my duty for my country, for my nation, for my race and for my female kind. I have a solemn, and an indispensable responsibility to offer everything I have to end this miserable war, that not only killed the majority of our men, but also left women vulnerable to cruel attacks."

"Is it your wish to fight in order to keep religious ideas in place?" the old man enquired. He turned directly towards the woman whose face was set and stern. "Indeed, this overwhelming war that is choking us from every side, but it is not for or because of religion that we fight."

"This is not a religious war for me," the young woman reiterated, "nor is it a political war. This is a woman's war, where women must fight to defend her honour and fight to retain the right to wear modest clothing and harness human dignity."

"Why," said the old man, "cannot you send some men from your household in your place?"

His haggard face was covered with deep wrinkles; his long white hair flowed over the coarse lump of sagging skin which seemed marked with injuries from bygone days.

Upon this, the old religious cleric addressed himself to the young woman with great warmth and earnestness. "If your cousins and brothers and your uncles all had perished in this war, they did so to defend this land and ensure you are safe!" said he, "and they certainly wished you to be far away from the dangers of war and combat!"

"My family members are dead!" the woman repeated severely.

"But if they had perished, no doubt it was their desire that you might both survive and celebrate their lives and legacy." The old man pleadingly added, "Why therefore do you hasten your doom by entering the paths of pain and torment?"

"I could never think of my own safety, when millions of our young men, and our brothers and uncles all perished, uncertain of their future and unknowing if their sacrifices had been in vain."

She stopped suddenly, still afraid to take the decisive step. "No, I will say no more. Allah is the God of our own people and our enemies. If God is removed from our land and religion is banned, Persian women will become dishonoured and we shall all live like savages. I would rather die than let our nation be overtaken by the godless foe."

Hereupon, the woman left his presence and withdrew with the utmost precipitation.

"I admit that I am no substitute for an entire lost race in our nation, but I must attend this battle in person and avenge the blood of all my relatives, who were summoned to this office one by one, and none of them every returned."

"Ah," said the old man, plucking up spirit, "but you must not become so enraged over the matters of politics and war. Let men conduct battles and return victorious."

"No!" replied the woman, with tenfold solemnity, "my desire to defend this nation does not stem from ambition or aspiration. I must fight because I am a woman, and our enemies are seeking the eradication of religion, and they wish to see all holiness and religions eliminated. I cannot let that happen." The sounds of conversation and laughter ceased, and the young woman could sense the office workers reorienting, trying to figure out what had caused her sharp rebuke.

She preserved a calm and firm demeanour, adding, "Perhaps I am to die soon, and be soon buried. Perhaps the grave is waiting for me and I must keep my appointment!"

"Please sit and calm down," the old man pleaded. The older sister was resolute on going to war and the Imam was perspiring with anxiety and terror, knowing that no man, however well trained, could not return from the battle grounds, and what chance did this young woman have of coming back from battle alive?

"Thank you, I shall stand," she said rather proudly.

"We understand it is your wish to be conscripted into the army, but we cannot allow this, for it is the duty of men of God to fight and die to protect women."

"But you are wrong!" She shouted. "It is a woman's duty to protect the faith that honours and protects her."

Fuming with cold rage, the woman whipped around and then walked out of the office.

An old scholar and imam who was the leader of the local congregation and managed the affairs of this three hundred old mosque, overheard the young woman's heated words, and now, followed her outside and saw her get into her car.

Before she could pull out, he wobbled closer and used his walking cane to gesture at her to lower the window. Knocking sharply on her window, he told her if passion drives you let reason hold the reins. "My daughter," he added, "I knew your father who gave his life 8 years ago to uphold the faith of God which freed us from the debauchery of paganism that was attempting to come back to us after a thousand years of scholarly saints and philosophers. Your uncle and cousin have all paid the ultimate price, now I beg you to let it go. Let men fight the war for God and faith and let men protect the honour and veil of women so that sick deemed men do not destroy this country by banning faith like pagans of Rome and pagans of Zoroaster Persia."

"No, honourable scholar," the young woman replied coldly. "Forgive me for being so clear, but this is a woman's war, a war against our women. It is a war against all women. The enemy wants to destroy faith and religion and make women public property for men. They want to strip women like girls working in clubs who take their clothes off and objectify themselves lower than any pig has to do for some food. They have brainwashed and groomed by faithless men to happily dishonour themselves. No matter how much force I have to use, I must restore this nation into religious observances."

"No, my child," the old man whimpered, "faith is a thing of the heart, a thing that must form from the deepest part of the heart, a love for the heavenly God which cannot be forced or coerced. No government can force people to believe in a God they don't want to. Faith must come naturally to people; you must know that."

The old man had never seen anyone so angry, and it was frightening him out of his wits. The young woman did not yell, and she didn't curse. She just went very still and very quiet. The only signs of her cold rage were her silver eyes, glittering with a deadly calm. "You men do not need religion, but the women do. The orphans do. Our nations' children do. Without religion, women will be forced to live like animals, unchaste, unclothed, and uncherished."

As she spoke, the old cleric tried not to flinch in his chair as she stood from the giant wooden desk. The desk clerks seated beside him, sucked in a breath.

No one spoke. He wanted to convince her that her thoughts were misleading, but he knew if he started talking, his trembling voice would betray his fear.

“Our country is in danger! Our faith and religion will be lost should foreign enemies continued to use our neighbours to attack us. I care not for theology or the laws and rules of God, even if men edited it and made it appear a pressing, I only love the God evil men hate. Whatever God’s decree may be cruel, men or a million times worse than even the worst what God could have given. In the oppression of God's law there is freedom, in the humility of God's rules and regulations there is honour and dignity, in the anger of God there is love and compassion for humanity, in the limitations of God's law there is love and equality and protection for all weak orphans, women and children. I love God because men hate Him. I defend the laws of God which defend the orphans and the weak and the woman. I am no fool. I am no child who gets beguiled by the false freedom that men offer to turn children and woman into common animals. In the freedom of men there is only dishonour, abuse and humiliation. In their honour, there's only degradation. In men's world of freedom, there is only animal brutality, cruelty and the manipulation and grooming of women and children. I shall stand by the laws of God and shall stand to fight it and protect it with my life out for the prediction of God's law so the future generations of millions of women and children can enjoy dignity, safety and protection in their own family and in their own homes with the laws of marriage and the laws of Love which forbids forced marriage and abuse from their own gender and their own family and bloodline. I shall defend God's law where He dignifies and honours women and children and allows them to wear coverings and not keep them out there like animals who are free in the street for men to abuse and the woman who have been turned into animals by cruel and manipulative evil and sick abusive men who get groomed, tortured, stripped and used by all the whole world and believe themselves to be free. I shall fight and my blood will never be more worthier than to defend the laws and fate of God. I care not for ideology; I care not for rules and regulations, I care only for a God and His unchanging laws of dignity and true freedom and true respect.”

The Fire Rescue

The noise of the blasting bombs was deafening, and the consequent explosions sounded ear splitting, making it obvious that many residents of the city were certain to suffer burst eardrums. In the narrow alleyways where the ventilations were cloying, poisonous gas from the incendiary bombs emitted sulphurous discharge that could fill smoky areas with acrid residue. Elderly citizens instantaneously fell dead, despite the sacrificial efforts of emergency personnel to save their lives.

A massive fire erupted at an administrative building outside Tehran from the bombing raids, the local emergency services have, and even after a day, firefighters were still attempting to extinguish the blaze.

She turned and observed behind her a thick smoke rolling after her. As she neared the burning building, black smoke covered the horizon, and soon afterward, the cloud seemed to descend, and covered the whole area, and though she knew she would willingly meet death, if she could have the satisfaction of seeing that those who were trapped within were able to escape.

Fire blazed from every side, and the heat where she stood was intense and even the whole aspect of approaching the burning building was terrifying. But she heard a faint cry emitting from the fiery interior, and knew someone was trapped inside the blaze. Making her way to the door, she found her path blocked completely by a solid block of fire, so she doubled back and charged at the partially opened window. Debris and loose planks of bricks and woods fell around her and carefully tried to shield her head from the direct impact, but the whole spot was charged with electricity, due to the building's generator exploding, and the fire suddenly became so violent that she was obliged to retreat momentarily, but the cries for help echoed once more, and the young woman threw caution in the wind and plunged headfirst into the flames. Even the heavens seemed lurid with flame and the atmosphere inside the building was dark and oppressive. She tried to peer in to the horizon but wherever she looked, the skies were murky with vapours and faint clouds were gleaming with the reflected smoke.

She had scarce stepped into the building proper and could only see the outline of the entrance hall, when darkness of chemicals and smoke overspread her, not like that of a cloudy night, or when there is no moon, but of a chamber which was all shut up and all the natural and manmade sources of lights were extinct. She knew not which direction to head into, for nothing could be heard save the roar of the inferno and crackling of wooden panels and doors, as it became cinder. She strained her ears and then hears the unmistakable shrieks of men,

The screams of young men within the building both alarmed and worried her. It sounded as though this was a makeshift military barracks or training camp for new recruits, and the men who had signed up to defend their land were now were trapped somewhere in the lower level of this administrative building. When torrents of fire precipitated itself into the building interior, the scene became deathly frightening, and although locals gathered in lines and fetched buckets of water to douse the flame, the building façade assumed a character of a terrific and indescribable horror and dismay. No sign of life could be seen, and the unmistakableness of destruction was never more perceptibly displayed than when the incendiary bomb landed a direct hit on the centre of the building.

Her heart raced when she heard the cries of men; some calling for their children, while others for their parents begging for a miracle. Several men called for their wives and others lamented their own fate. Straining her ears, the young woman followed the sound and tried to reach the source. The screams and howls of pain were distinguishing each other only by their voices; one mourning the fate of his family, while audibly wishing to die a painless death before the fire consumed him. The very fear of a torturous death made these youths cry in panic, and some were imagining that this would be their last and eternal night, augmenting the real terror of their situation by imaginary ones... But the young woman no longer heard the cries, as fits of cough overtook her, and smoke choked the breath out of her lungs.

She had never displayed more courage than on this distressing day. Surrounded by injured and dying men. Since the stumbling horror of the darkness when she had rushed into that inferno, and found survivors huddled in the wind-lashed amphitheatre, dark slopes of smoky cloud were rising around.

The men who survived the smoke were in shock and were already showing signs of hypothermia; others with life-draining wounds were succumbing to their injuries.

The local authorities confirmed that at least two people died in the fire, but media reports put the number of deaths at five or six. According to sources within the emergency services, one person jumped to his death before the arrival of any help, and the rest fainted from smoke inhalations when the fire reached them, while two clerks who were trapped in the building had been crushed after the ceiling collapsed.

The unconscious men who were unable to get out of the enclosed space were rescued by the young woman who went inside five times to carry each person out of the inferno.

The local branch of the emergencies was aware that a blaze had broken out in the administrative building of the scientific centre of their town, several kilometres northeast of the Persian capital, but by the time they arrived,

there were no one alive inside, as the young woman had carried them to safety. The eight-story building was engulfed in smoke, with a fire raging about mid-way up, and desperate people trapped inside were smashing windows to breathe.

Elderly members of the family who had faced persecution in the reign of the shah and were categorically banned from observing religious rituals, expressed dark omens for the outcome of this war. There were too many deaths here.

When the old veterans were consulted, they foretold doom, as they are wont to do. Persian grandparents grieved the loss of grandchildren, and they too shared tales that were likely very apocryphal and added to the re-telling for dramatic effect, yet their existence suggested a general unease amongst the people of Tehran.

Foreign troops that were part of an international coalition, relentlessly bombarded Persian cities, and troops, as though not bound by the laws of hospitality or honour. Rather, the badge of services in their uniforms made them immune to human feelings, and they inevitably suffered penury as a consequence of their own depredations.

Hatred and suspicion ran deep, and none who had ever encountered the enemy were likely to feel reassured until they were able to exact revenge.

The woman noticed the fire ahead. She sprang to her feet, and dashed over the overpass, and clamoured over the rubble to get nearer to the drawbridge, and the beat of her feet over the paved street was lost in the whistling of the night blast.

Whatever may have been the doubts entertained by the people on the street, they were dissipated the moment she charged headfirst into the inferno, and plunged into the smoke-filled interior to search for survivors. The young woman darted away from the survivor, and ran back to the building, which was still standing, and she searched for the remaining survivors. She could not imagine that there could be more men inside the building who were perhaps only half buried in the ruins, and who might have been saved had there been help at hand. She had to get in and prevent innocent countrymen from dying a lingering death from heat and hunger. One youth was lying unresponsive, likely out of breath from smoke inhalation, but she did not wait to verify if he as dead or not, but snatched him by the clothes, and rushing with him in her arms towards the staircase, she found the stair had fallen in the fire, cutting off all further progress in that direction. The young woman panicked, and rushed from room to room, pursued by the raging fire and evading the falling materials, and at length managed to drag the young man with her as she reached a balcony, and as her last refuge, she held up the man in a standing position,

and implored the few passers-by to catch him as she lowered his limp frame. By this time, the fire and heat intensified, and with intent on securing their own safety, most of the bystanders turned a deaf ear to her cries, and shrank away from the perilous building, but one two men in religious garbs spread out their prayer shawls and beckoned to the women to drop the person she had rescued. Meanwhile, the building exteriors had caught fire, and nearly obscured the balcony from view, but not before the woman dropped the injured youth at the two local clerics, who caught him in time to prevent him from being hurled into the devouring flames.

“Oh! They are all dead!” the exclamation burst from the lips of a horrified neighbour. “How frightful!” cried a pedestrian, who actually felt so shocked at the sight that he came near the blazing building, causing his precious outfit to be seared. Like those around her, she was just as badly stunned by the explosions though she continued to stare downward at the spot in the road where the bombing had taken place. There was a certain awful premonition about it that chained her fast, making it impossible for her to tear her eyes away. The entire steel-reinforced concrete building could have been blown to dust by this well directed monster shell, and upon closer inspection, she noticed a great hole where the roof had formerly stood. Now, in its place there was a yawning chasm several metres wide, with parts of roof panels and satellites antennas scattered around in confusion.

An enemy bomber jet was visible. The plane flew over and was engaged by partisan fire. It appeared to go into a deep dive but straightened out almost at tree level and began strafing the commuters who had halted due to the smoke from the burning building obscuring their view. Civilians abandoned their cars and had to start diving for cover on either side of the road. One of the local fighter planes gave the enemy bomber a furious chase but for a moment, the bomber seemed to get away. Locals, enraged by the attack on the large administrative building, began to race on foot and fired uniseriately at the low-flying enemy plane, hoping to bring down the plane. They were not supremely shocked by the bombing of civilians’ roads, as such strafing was commonplace at this stage of war, and locals became used to having a go with their rifles, and nearly everybody on the road took a shot at the plane. This finally proved fortunate, as moments later, the bomber jet began to descend with rapid speed. One person ejected from the plane prior to its hard landing, while the pilot presumably crash-landed the plane on a turf.

Many an anxious eye scanned the heavens toward the south, wondering if enemy bomber planes would return for a second round of attack, or if this would be followed by some skilfully directed incendiary shelling, causing

more death and destruction. But there was no way of turning aside; all the drivers -could do was to sit there, and wait and wonder.

Finding that she was passing the scene of the explosion, the woman resolved to circle around the roundabout and linger near the location for a brief time, though of course she logically could do nothing toward lending a helping hand. As it seemed a bit dangerous loitering there, directly in the track of any possible future projectiles that might be dropped in the same quarter by the enemy planes overhead, that had started to spiral upward until they hung far above the ground and apparently out of harm's way. But she ignored her own safety, and began to make her way inside the ruins of the bringing building which was filled with acrid smoke.

Locals confirmed that they also saw a powerful explosion moments after the bomb was dropped on the building, with plumes of flame shooting out of the structure. Neighbours noted that several persons had been saved by a female first responder, who it said was evacuated via a staircase.

Tehran's region governor later said that two people had died as a result of the fire. The ministry said the fire had spread from the fifth to the eighth floor, with operations being complicated by high temperatures and smoke.

The Lynching Mob:

The locals were rushing with improvised weapons such as pans and pots and skewers, and they rushed fiercely at the man who had made a hard landing in spite of his parachute. The enemy was able to land safely, but before he could remove his chute, the locals bore down on him, and seized him by the collar and dragged him to the city centre, where pedestrians landed blows after blows upon the men who they knew were responsible for dropping incendiary bombs on the local civilians' population.

Finding the enemy airman's gun lying on the ground, the young woman raised it, aimed heavenward, and fired several times to gain the attention of the mob who were appearing to become more aggressive by the minute.

She made a reserved attempt to disperse the mob but was dissuaded by their fierce cries of grief. Everyone in this street appeared to have lost a loved and dear one, and at one point, a policeman who tried to discourage the mob from beating the enemy airman, was put to flight by a shower of stones.

The multitude, continuing its revenge, tried to reach the city centre, but were assailed by a group of clerics who were making their way to the mosque to lead the noonday prayer. After resisting a few moments, several members of the mob dispersed, but the rest fell back on the boulevards, hurrying to the outskirts of the city proper to render punishment to the enemy fighter who they held responsible for their losses.

The central government in Tehran knew that the daily assemblages of the people threatened the public tranquillity, but the nation and its citizens were greatly disturbed and since people were so easily deceived when suffering, they accused the airman of being responsible for the deaths of all their own civilians, and the protests grew so large, that government troops had to employ force to disperse the mob, after having summoned the citizens to retire.

At one point, the man who had jumped from his plane managed to free himself and ran, but with drawn sticks, the mob pursued him into the walkways, and the enraged and unarmed multitude who were initially peaceably promenading was now awash with indignation and soon cries calling for revenge resounded on every side.

The young woman spoke coldly, but in a firm voice, and addressed her countrymen. "I know you all are hurt. I too lost more family members than I could count, and when I heard of the painful way a close relative had died, I too felt this rage you are experiencing today, and I too wanted to avenge the blood of our brothers and fathers. But an old cleric told me that it was not right to be passionate, and that if passion drives me, I should let reason hold the reigns." Her words barely audible over the avenging cries of the mob, but she continued. "Less than a week ago, my young cousin, who was dearer to me than my own brothers, died in this meaningless war. When I found out how men of his platoon fought, I could not bear to listen to how they died. My cousin and his platoon members were retreating from a heavy attack, and with only nine of his men left, they found a small escape route to Iran via the border, but faced a heavy barbed wire fence, which to cross was impossible. My cousin was mildly wounded, and he decided that the only way the men of his division could escape to safety on the other side was by climbing over the electrified fence, and since it was fatal to cross it, he volunteered to let his peers use his body as a shield, and willingly threw his body over the barbed wire fence and told his fellow soldiers to climb over his body, and reach safety. This my cousin and many others like him did without complaints. This sacrifice which they made without being asked is what makes this nation great, and their greatness will be in vain if we resort to dishonourable actions such as lynching prisoners without proper due legal course."

Once the enemy airman was apprehended by the crowd, the mob was let loose on him, and it seemed difficult for anyone to master their fury. The young woman tried to shout and order them to halt, but this was a moment

of their avenging enthusiasm, and they hurled curses and enraged lamentations at the man that was responsible for dropping the bomb on a large civilian building.

The crowd increased every moment, shouting revenge, and began to beat the prisoner with passion.

Realising that it was hopeless to order them into submission, the young woman fired blank shots in the air, and shocked the civilian mob into momentary silence. He black cloak whipped behind her and she moved purposefully to the centre of the mob and ordered them to release the enemy airman.

A flurry of protests erupted, as the crowd expressed horror at her request, and some even shouted traitor.

But the woman raised her hand and motioned for them to be calm and told them that the man in question will face justice in their courts, but beating an unarmed prisoner, even if he was responsible for the deaths of thousands of Persian civilians, was not justifiable in the court of law. She spoke loudly over the commotion, and said, "Oh, my people, we can never win by killing, we can only win by stopping all killing! I lost male members of my family, one by one, and saw them mutilated and burned to death. From the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea, there were only horror. We cannot justify killing through war, because no war and no fighting can give man the license to kill. Our enemies and those of the world who have been tortured because of their own passion and lust and have now become insane with the fuel of jealousy and the heat of passion and they shall use each of our neighbouring countries to attack us turn by turn - and shall frame our nations and our religion to attack and kill every neighbouring country around us- until they give into passion and rage and start warfare by justifying murdering us and our civilians."

The people waited with impatience as the young woman spoke, and as the realisation that they would have to let the man go became clear to them, but they were restless because there was no doubt that when the evening approached, there would be another bombing raid during the night. "There is no way you can win this war, that is given by powerful insane men whose hearts are fuelled with rage and jealousy and the fiery hatred of God. Our enemies are only the victim of this war. And should we let greed and passion take control of our hearts, then we too shall be forced to become the attackers!

Our current enemies were forced to attack us and forced to kill us and if they didn't agree out of poverty or fear, then indeed our enemies would have found another passionate nation neighbour to us to attack, invade and destroy our nation and religion, by putting false fear into their hearts towards us. Jealousy is the most powerful incentive and passion the most powerful fuel, and together these two attributes can turn the greatest man

into the devil himself." The colours of her words were crimson red, like blood, and all she wanted was to put her sorrow in the fire and let all emotions burn before her eyes.

In reply to the cries that arose on all sides for the death of the enemy soldier, she said, "This is neither the mode nor the moment to obtain justice from an enemy prisoner."

The woman insisted that they had to be fair and just in the matters of law, as passion and rage could never make a nation successful. Several people protested fiercely, accusing her of being a traitor to the nation, and a cry of treachery arose on every side, mingled with murmurs and threats against the young woman. She promised them that the young airman would be taken to a POW camp and be made to answer for his crimes, but the mob remained in place, enraged and mistrustful.

She narrowed her steely grey eyes, and continued, "It is our laws of God and honour and dignity of religion which made the whole world rally against us and defame us by framing us for every crime and violence that they themselves have done in our name. They shall not stop; they cannot stop until we let go off faith in God, or our honour and dignity and become like the jungle beasts, who live in adultery and fornication and nudity and change the animals' laws of absolute freedom at their own wish and whim and legalise all sexual abuse of their boys and degradation and objectification of their girls. The enemies shall not allow this war to stop, if our neighbouring countries stop killing us- then they themselves will be invaded, attacked and starved to death by foreign forces and demonic godless powerful people, and if they (our neighbours) continue killing our civilians, then they will be destroyed anyway by the curse and the pain of our innocent souls."

The sun was just breaking over Tehran as it gave light to the early morning fog on the nearby river, creating a glowing haze of happiness and hope, but the peace was an illusion as overhead, enemy planes whizzed past and silently stalked their prey with military stealth and precision.

Each man died in battle, and were laid low in the carnage! But neither man nor God became their avenger. They were cut down by great blows in the thick of the foe, but battling like the brave knight in the front lines of battle, the men of her nation stood their ground as the last line of defence.

"But we want to revenge on those who killed our family and bombed our homes!" Shouted several men in the crowd.

She stood straighter and used one hand to hold on to the billowing black veil and cloak which enveloped her, and raising another hand, she stopped them, and tried to make them understand how foreign forces were at play, and were using them and their neighbours to kill one another. "This war shall never stop so long as we hold onto to the honourable laws of God,"

she said sharply, "because we shall be defamed and starved and attacked and framed for every crime, but have hope O my people, for this worldly life is for a few days and we shall all very soon find our Lord and His eternal abode to live in for eternity. This life is just a mirage so have patience and never let passion take control of your hearts. No matter who kills or who is killed, never let hatred and anger and passion and murdering take over yourselves! Fight to stay humble! Fight for forgiveness! Fight for mercy towards all! Oh, my countrymen, fight to stay human because this world is bound to make all good men into cruel heartless beings! Our enemies shall use our passion to destroy us, and they shall use our passion to turn us against our own government and our own religion by framing them to us for every unforgivable crime until we start fighting and killing each other and become annihilated."

Speaking barely above a whisper, she added, "I too once felt this anger you all have in you. I also wanted to avenge the blood of the male relatives who were drafted and died in the war. But I know now, that one side must stop killing for the war to stop!

One nation must start forgiving for the war to stop!

One country must stop reacting to violence for the violence to stop!

A life for a life shall make the whole world dead."

The crowd was silent, but soon, the enemy airman began to attempt an escape, which caused the zealous mob to raise the battle cry of justice.

"We want justice! Justice!" Came their shrieks.

The young woman raised her hand, palms down, to calm the crowd, and she began to explain to them the importance of forgiveness. "Give peace preference over justice, oh my people! Yes, these airmen and pilots dropped deadly bombs over our homes and killed our civilians in the most excruciating way, but if we kill them now, then we shall be no better than them. Our enemies are but humans just like us, and every soldier you kill, you kill his mother too; and remember, every soldier you kill, you kill his daughters too, and every soldier that dies, you kill his widow too.

Let not our rulers or our enemies take control of our hearts and souls!

Let us not justify murder even in war and give peace a chance. And give peace the only chance and give nothing but peace a chance!

Let us be the greater ones by stopping first, let us be the first to forgive! Let us be the first to withdraw.

Let us be the greater one by not reacting with violence but with love and mercy."

Pausing she pondered her next words. In her darkest days, she could not be accused either of false enthusiasm, nor melancholy and superstition, but perpetually possessed a cheerful and benign temperament, which softened the trials and adversities weighing on many periods of her young life. She said, "I am a victim just like you all, my parents have died in the hands of the enemies which I forgive and defend today, all my 5 uncles have died and all but one small cousin is left and the bloodline of our family has ended with all men and boys dead in the hands of our enemies before they bore a child!

But with pain wrecking my heart and the fiery fire of revenge still hot in my blood, I still choose mercy and love over killing and revenge.

How much more bloodshed shall soak our earthen floors? How many more mothers have to mourn their sons for this meaningless war to stop?

How many more widows shall have to weep for their husbands and how many more orphans shall curse those who killed their father until we become human again? When shall we let humanity take control and give preference to humanity over killing and fighting?!"

Hearing her rousing speech, the crowd murmured their assent and began to disperse. Several older men dragged the prisoner to a nearby police station to be placed in government custody to be transferred to a prisoner of war camp.

A roaring noise arrested her attention. It was the sound of electrical outlets and gas tanks detonating and shrieking as they burst from the ruined airplane's hot interior. From a distance, it seemed that there was someone moving feebly in the plane's cockpit. Volumes of hissing steam was rising from beneath the pilot and intermittently obscured him from view. The awful agent of death, which delivered damnation and destruction to many innocent homes and buildings, was now about to be consumed in its own fuel. If the plane exploded, the man who was trapped inside would have no way to be alive.

Without thinking, the young woman wrapped the flowing shawl firmly around her shoulders and moved briskly to the plane that had crash landed nearby. Her impetuosity of temper required strong principle to subdue, and the undeviating gentleness and forbearance which she displayed was not often appreciated by those who did not know her intimately. The enemy bombardier was unable to exit his plane and was now trapped and likely suffocating from the small fires that were igniting inside the engine.

She increased speed and took several long strides and leaped on the wing and crawled inside the plane via a smashed-out window. Upon seeing her stern face and sharp eyes, the man shrank back in horror, thinking she had come to deliver him to a torturous mob who would beat him to death, and

in panic, he tried to use his service pistol and aimed it at his own head, but before he could fire, the young woman lunged at him, and used her shawl to tie his waist and yank him to safety.

Meanwhile, those pedestrians who saw her rushing into the burning plane were anxiously waiting in the street, wondering if she found any survivors. Some shouted that they would take revenge on their loved one's death by beating the pilot who dropped the bombs, but alarmed by this fierce sentiment, before handing over the prisoner to them, the young woman reminded her countrymen of how important it was to uphold honour and justice. "Indeed, oh my people, our enemies shall try to make beasts out of us, for it is only the acts of beasts to kill and die killing, any beast can kill, but only a human being with the most supreme heart can forgive their killer. Our purpose is not this life! Our purpose is not to kill to survive like common animals who fight and kill for food and lodging! Our true destiny is the life beyond this life hereafter! So, give your enemies whatever they want from this short worldly life -but let them not take away your humanity and your faith in God! Let us give humanity a chance to allow us to stay humane ...

How many more mothers have to die mourning their son's death until we find some mercy in our angry hearts to forgive those who attacked us, for they were also the victim of the most powerful enemies? Let us no longer get used by our enemies who are playing with our passion and using it to make us kill or die."

Her words somehow had its desired effect, and the people in the street agreed to get the enemy pilot to a medical station to be treated.

The woman noticed that the enemy bomber was gravely wounded, so she carefully lowered her black shawl and handed the wounded man to the outstretched hand of the waiting crowd but before she could remove herself from the cockpit, her clothes became engulfed in fire as the cockpit burst into a ball of flame, and before the eyes of onlookers, she perished in a blazing inferno.

As the cold and weary wind increased speed, the people of the city stood huddled together for warmth. The low cloud and mist scurried by drifts of snow meant winter was here and the second phase of the cold wave would be long and arduous for the city residents.

When the beautiful younger woman arrived in the location of the fire, only the grim silence and acrid smoke of destruction greeted her. There was no sign of her older sister or her body. The image of her sister was the principal object of which she had the most fond recollection. Her older sister's countenance was indelibly fixed in her heart, and there is no doubt, her life was powerfully sustained by the sweet portrait, on which she had so long gazed.

Many must have wondered if survival was a blessing or trial. The young woman did not survive the fire and did not come out of the blaze alive, but she was survived by an extremely emotional younger sister who mourned her endlessly to the point of death. Though a martyr, she erased all fair prospect from her surviving sister's life, and spread gloom and mourning through the dwelling, which once had seemed devoted to prosperity and joy.

"Do not give up on your own life, for not all is lost. In hopelessness and despair, at the seeming severity, and the nature of grief, you shall find that Allah is most near to you, and makes you most dear to Himself."

Locals echoed her grandness, and many remarked how it was indeed a beautiful trait of her to adorn herself with the soft features of an affable and condescending temper, and which would drive away the shadows and the sorrows which so often rest upon the human brow.

What a brief life it was, and though she was engaged in the busy and tumultuous scenes of society, she never remitted her attention to her race or religion. She was fierce in her protection of fellow man, and neither politics, nor the pursuit of wealth and power could tempt or torment her into abandoning her principles. The attractions the world presented no allure to her young heart, but made her more resolute to hold on to the principles she embraced in youth.

The old government appointed religious cleric was informed of the roadside accident and received the notice of praying for the funeral prayers of five men, and a woman. The religious cleric cried out, "Reign in thy angels, O Allah! And strike terror, O Lord, into the hearts of those angels who lay to waste Thy creation. Grant comfort and peace to Thy servants to resist most manfully against that reprobate force, and from Thy heavenly throne, defend us in the battle against the prideful enemies and their foreign powers, and grant us victory against the rulers of this world's pain and darkness. For the sake of this sisters' pain, O Allah, come to the assistance of humankind, whom Thou hast created with Thine own love and likeness! Let no more girls be gone from us, and no more of our youths perish in this useless war."

The Imam received the body and was astonished to recognise the face of the woman. It was the same woman who he had spoken with hours ago, and although barely recognisable, he saw the unmistakable veil and cloaks that she had worn. Now her body was blistered and when he heard how heroically she died, saving five of her countrymen from the burning building and finally perishing after leaping into a burning airplane to set the pilot free, he was overcome with emotion. The outer doors were opened

at the Imam's command; the multitude rushed into the interior. They ascended to the carpeted hall, and while lining along the doors, awed by the presence of the old religious cleric, who prudently placed himself the recess of a window overlooking the national cemetery. The Imam prayed thus, "O Messenger of Allah, who brought forth to us the miraculous pages of the Holy Koran! Intercede for us to the God of peace, that He would crush the foe under our feet, and remove the bloodlust from the angels of death so they never again assault our people with indiscriminate deaths. Beseech unto to God to lay hold of the foe, and the ancient pagans and their godless customs that had barred our women from veiling and prevented men from praying."

The central towns of Persia were tidy but crowded places, not at all like the image of the orderly villages, where houses and preened gardens were frozen in time, and gentle animals and men mingled freely, and in the occasional winters when the counties were dark and obscured by snowfall, men had a fortnight to develop their orientation families huddled in their principal family rooms, and shared ancient heroic tales beside the fitful glow from the stone fire and rush lights.

For many kilometres, the empty canvas of the Persian desert was marked by the network of ancient trails, with every feature in an otherwise bare landscape, dotted with ancient tales, and plotted and surveyed with codes and numbers. The sunken depressions and oases held within the histories of heroes, and every salt marsh and dry valley that could spring to brilliant life after gentle rains, offered a home to generations of poets, philosophers and sages. But all that grandeur and all those centuries of civilisation were being threatened by the sword of death in the meaningless battles.

War was a woeful place to be and battles where men slashed and slayed, where comrades warned and shouted, and loved ones were routed or wounded, and injured casualties lurked in pain or swaggered in daze, and desperate people shoved and groaned to get away from peril.

It was common knowledge that the battle ground was where one was worsted and in pain and anguish, fighters shuddered and shrieked. One was roped or picked in war, and due to increasing hunger and lack of supplies, their possessions were plucked or robbed from them. War was land where the sacredness of the soul was ignored, and where bodies and booty were equally ransacked. It was not the warriors alone who were affected by the cruel codes of war, but their women and heirs were afflicted as well.



The Oceans of Tears:

All the joyous scenes of her life in the past and every happiness returned fresh upon her memory. She had the sudden urge to examine every circumstance of doubt as the funeral procession passed before her, and nothing she could think of allowed her grief to lessen or her despair to diminish. She knew she was not a child that she should weep so hysterically but she could not control her tears.

"Sister of my heart! What right had you to leave me?" The younger sister lamented openly, throwing herself over the spot where her older sister was laid to rest. "Who gave you the right to abandon me and sacrifice your life for an enemy combatant? Was a human in all the universe more God fearing than you and more merciful than you? Then why hadn't you taken pity on the sister you left behind to mourn herself into oblivion when you chose to leave her and forever abandon her to the jaws of pain torment and darkness!

What right had you my only sister to abandon me to this cruel and lonely world where man has neither mercy nor pity for the weak and the broken-hearted ones?" She paused and rested her eyes upon the dry leaves, that were fluttering in the forest. In the light of day, one could never tell of the storm they had suffered the night before, and even as the winds howled and tore wilted leaves from the branches to the ground, they glowed softly in the moonlight, and she was certain, would reflect the soft sun rays of the morning.

"Oh, my Lord what is time to Thee?" She began once more, pleading to her God. "And what is time to man but pain suffering and a loneliness that makes every heart insane with grief and longing?

How could you abandon me, O sister - to this world knowing I couldn't live even a moment without your love and affection and endless undeserving mercy?

Oh, my Allah, Maker of my weeping heart! Oh, my Maker! There is no happiness for me in this life any longer for she who was my all has left me forever and has gone to You.

My Lord, in this world every man is for himself. But You made me different, and I could not have survived had you not send me to her as a sibling for the world is too harsh too cruel and too cold for tormented hearts like mine! And I have none but Thee and she whom Thou took away from me."

That evening, as she tried to enter her own home which she shared with her sister, the young woman broke into fits of sobs, as she recollected the memories of her dear departed sister.

Her chamber overlooked a small garden but she could not calm her grieving heart, and lay pensively gazing at the beams of the rising moon as they trembled on the leaves of dead trees, and all she could think of was her older sister lying alone in the darkness of her grave, with no sunlight to brighten her face or the moonlight to cool her eyes. Oh, when the clock had just tolled midnight, she stood with alarm as another strain of sorrow flowed over her. Unable to remain motionless, the young woman rose hastily from her seat and stepped tremulously to the window and looked upon the faces on the street that were rushing away. People on the street

were oblivious to her pain, as she alone was destined to bury and mourn her beloved sister.

“O my Maker,” she beseeched, “this heart that you made me with, it is broken, Oh, Lord of broken hearts -who but You could know the pain which torments the hearts very soul?

Who but you could understand my pains and agony? Man cares not, my Lord, so who have I to weep to except Thee, my Maker and my sister’s Lord and God?!

Oh, my Lord, leave me not behind for the cruel hearts to hurt me. Leave me not behind in this worldly life for the foreign soldiers to hurt and abuse! Suffering heart breaks and a pain that cuts the heart into a million burning pieces is enough for me to become mad for Thy company and away from the cruel and heartless souls of this worldly life!

Oh, how many hearts have the world broken? How many souls has the world tormented with death and depression and hopelessness until they gave up on life and living?” She mourned openly, and tried to survive until sundown that day, but the day was longer than she had expected it to be, and with no family, food or friends, never before this day had she face acute hunger in her life. And all the time, with the throb of pain in her abdomen, the episodes of grief pulsed in her mind. Utter exhaustion made her fall asleep periodically that night, and momentarily she was able to ignore the hunger that gnawed at her stomach. She lay on the ground, with shoes on, trying to keep some of the coldness at bay, but her feet that had swollen from walking several kilometres that day, was swollen and hurt intermittently.

With the death of the older sister, as the younger one grieved, the elderly religious cleric led the prayers for the remaining five times obligatory daily prayers, and waited to see if any new corpses arrived for burial. To his surprise, he found none.



Trail of Tears

“Oh, my soul, piece of my own heart, wake up sister, wake up and speak with me one last time. Don't abandon me to this cruel world!” To know that her older sister died alone, burning to death in the middle of a blazing fire that broke out inside the narrow expanse of a bomber plane, and to find out that even her fair form and face were scarred and wounded was

devastating. It wrung her heart with grief, and filled her eyes with tears and the idea that she may not have been recognised and would have been buried in the cemetery of the unknown soldier should the old religious Imam not have noticed and recognised her.

“Don't leave me so quickly and so abruptly,” the lovely woman sobbed, “let me give a decent goodbye! Let me give you a final farewell Oh, my own hearts soul!

Don't leave me behind alone and lonely in this cruel loveless world where men kill and die for hate and jealousy wealth and anger.

O my sister, what right had you to leave me? What right had anyone given you to abandon me like this?

You had no right to destroy my life, my sanity my very soul forever like this. How can I survive a moment of this pain! My Lord owner of a heart so broken and a mind so tormented, I beg of Thy mercy for who is there to know of my heart's agony save You?

Oh, sister -this world is cruel indeed. And I am afraid.

I am afraid.

I cannot live one moment more with this fear and pain consuming myself whole.

I have no one, my Lord. I have no one, my Lord!

Oh, my Lord, let me come to You -to Your kingdom of heaven and to my sister who I trust is with Thee.

Let me come to You, oh, my Lord, for you know my pain- you know what ails my heart you know my tears and the madness of my wailing soul.

This world- it has nothing for me.”

Breathing shockingly, she walked among the shadows of the trees, and wondered if all humans were destined to move on to their graves, like voyagers drowning in their beds, or did death act as the emancipator to all sorrow and dread? As she raised her head to clear her thoughts, a beam of moonlight fell upon her countenance and streaks of tears glittered like marks of visible mourning.

“This life has no hope for my broken and injured heart.” She lamented. “I want You, my Lord and I need her- whose life you gave me by making her my sister out of the billions of pairs of sister Thou hast made, her for me and me for her through centuries Thou had chosen us to be bound by blood and love, so take me with her so we could be with You! My Lord, take us and keep us near You for it was she who gave her life and her soul for Thy cause and to uphold thy belief and thy religion when the whole world banded against You and Your faith.

O Lord of my burning heart! Oh, Lord who knows the anguish of my beating heart, take pity on my soul for it no longer has the will to survive and live this cruel lie called life.

Oh, Controller of this endless universe, I have no wish to survive this life and I have no strength to go on living while she whom I loved lay dead, never to return.

Controller of the skies that smiles while men cry and die! I have no wish to live this life and live through these days and nights of worldly life where all souls born must die, there were souls who lived here 60 years ago who are now all dead and gone and have forgotten the short period of time they loved and laughed, this who die today and those who shall die 40 years later shall feel they loved for the same amount of time when death comes, and I have no will or wish to fight to live in a world so marred with bloodshed and violence and jealousy..." The finality of death was so terrifying that it froze her blood with horror, and cold damps hung on her trembling body as she shed bitter tears. She continued to walk sombrelly, followed the unpaved path on the winding track. Huge drops of cold rain splashed on her face and on the path, but she hardly noticed them. She welcomed the rain, hoping God was dispensing mercy upon her older sister. She calculated that she must have climbed another five hundred feet by now, moving steadily along a tree-lined path. For a moment, she was certain she was lost, and then was finally able to emerge from the trees. She was tired and out of breath, and her calves were burning with overexertion, and her chest rose and fell sharply. The wind was whistling at this height and tugged at her damp shawl.

From the edge of the hill, she could hear the rising wind, which howled and whistled through the rocks, sounding like the funeral beats, and when the branches of the trees crashed together, the forest itself trembled from terror. She prayed thus, "Oh, Lord of me and my beloved guardian, was it not Thee who cursed me with this thing called love, was it not Thee who made my heart so weak? How then could Thou abandon me to this lonely cruel world of men who hate and fight and kill to diminish and destroy the laws of faith and honour of Thy religion and shall not stop tormenting us until we surrender Faith in Thee?

Oh, how long shall my life sentence be to serve in this prison which is worse than hell- for man is the God here and God has abandoned all of womankind and children to their care and control?!"

She froze upon hearing the painful howl of a distant jackal. It seemed as though the animal too was in pain and grieving the loss of a loved one. She wanted to forget her piercing pain, and increased her pace, even though she noticed great frowning rocks boldly blocking the path on either side.

"My Lord," she cried once more, "Thou art Great and Thy laws most honourable but man is not great and man fights against the dignity and

honour of faith and religion to gain the right to sin and abuse and groom the future children into hating God and worshipping of lust and indecency.

My Lord- this world is cold and lonely and there is no love left for me to live for. There's no mercy for the merciful ones and no hope for the ones already abandoned by hope and pity!"

**Like the child sitting at her mother's feet,
How I await thee by that cemetery's street?
O sister! O best of friends! Thy absence still,
Suffers me to surrender to thy God's will!
O the impending night that darkens the land!
On the vastness of eternity, I shall stand,
Crossing the threshold of my native land,
Grasping the heavens with my hand!
For love of Him and heaven's sake,
O death! Shalt thou still betake,
And seize a woman's glory,
With deathly hospitality?
Shall deathly foes thus entertain,
And a moment here still remain,
Before it steals her breath away,
To suffer in silence and decay,
And away from all she loved so well,
Too painful to tolerate or tell.
It is of her that I would think,
Who would be last to die or sink,
And looking down at my beloved's face,
My sister's sufferings still I can trace,
Who served valiantly like foreign legions,
Braving brutality in the remotest regions!
Had they known she was my sister,**

**Or how my loss was lone and bitter,
Or trust and hope vanished like a cloud,
When she was draped in a funeral shroud?!
Would that I once more, could dream of a relief,
Forgetting the hour that fills my heart with grief,
Or wrings my soul with hopeless solicitations,
Cherishing the memories of our conversations?!**

“I long for Thee, my Lord!” The young woman cried out piteously. “I long for thy company and Thy love for my heart has broken in ways that is beyond human fathoming.

MY Lord, this world that Thou has sent me to is cruel, cruel it is indeed O Lord of my soul; so strong man has to be to survive this thing called life that I have given up every last hope and my heart yearns now only for Thee for who could love a weak hearted person like me save the One who made me who I am, weak broken and abandoned by all on earth!”

She sank to the floor, and listened as her breath became less laboured. The autumn wind whistled outside the doorway, and fresh chills arrested her body, making her feel doubly fatigued. A burning ache in her abdomen reminded her that she had no food for the past two days. Indeed, all her family members were gone, and they all died one by one, and this dear older sister was the one who had taken upon herself to make sure she never went a day without food, but this day, her sister was no more, and she was alone, cold, hungry and bitterly sorrowful.

“Why hadn't Thou made me an angel?” She raised her query to God. “For what reason hast Thou abandoned me for? How am I to survive when Thou art not here and she whom Thou sent for me is now gone. Gone from me! O Lord of this aching heart! She is gone forever and she cares not for the madness of my wailing against the dark silent and deaf skies!

There is no other soul that cares for me nor any other blood relations living who could have soothed my soul for all family and friends have died most brutally in this mad war where fire and acid rains from enemy planes and all the worlds power has united against a country so poor and insecure and shall not let us go until we abandon Thy faith and Thy Laws of religion O God of Abraham!

My Lord! It was only her and me against the world and now she is gone and I cannot serve my life sentence any longer.” She could not cease her wailing, for she had loved her as a sister and a friend, and this confident and stern older sister had been her vanguard from the day she was born. It

was this older daughter who always delighted in protecting her younger sibling, and encouraged and sustained their growing virtues and cherished in her growth."

She told others how her sister was noble, dignified, humble, and intensely private. It was not her words that endeared her to all, but her unpretentious and honest actions. Indeed, she let her actions and few public words speak for her, which they did so powerfully, as her last act on this earth demonstrated. She did not speak much, aside from expressing her desire to fight.

The old cleric nodded. No doubt of it. The people of Persia have witnessed her courage and composure, and they saw her as an inspirer of courage, a torchbearer of hope.

War was full of woe. It affected everyone, everywhere. No one was safe from the onslaught of battles, and no civilian was safe from death and destruction, and no woman were protected from the invading foes.

There were numerous aid stations across the city, and all were full to their capacity with wounded men and women.

Hundreds of patients lay on these hospital wards, suffering from bone fractures and atrocious explosions, experienced trauma from shower of bone shards which functioned as secondary projectiles. In these medical facilities, untreated victim quickly succumbed through shock and blood loss even if the tissue damage was insufficient. Men and women suffering from septicaemia and gangrene who survived their original trauma died a painful death. Inevitably, a carapace of death and decay swiftly came to surround the city of Tehran, and loud cries and wails could be heard from every street, as it was the sights that presaged death amongst those gently born to families who doted them. Parents washing and prepared the funeral shroud of children who should never have preceded them in death, and with the unexpected appearance of winter in the countryside, survivors vied with one another to purchase and claim byres. In the evening darkness, the hollow sounds of distant bombs echoed like thunder, and keening dirges sent shivers across populaces as sleepers huddled for warmth in their unfurnished and damaged homes.

In the midst of all this horror, the younger sister of the woman who had tragically perished in the plane explosion was unable to cope with her personal loss.

In the middle of the night, she rushed about the city centre and bewailed, "My heart is giving up and my mind has become numbed by the pain of man's cruelty and betrayals. I hear the screaming of women and children and see the scores of corpses taken away after each of the enemy planes bomb us into nothingness, as if we weren't human and a mere target set

for practice! Oh, war what do you to men and how quickly you turn men into blind raging killers!

Oh, warfare and bloodshed that makes humans question their own eyes! How long shall you make us suffer and sob and mourn our dead! How long shall we fight and how much blood must we shed for the laws of God and the religion of God to finally prevail amongst us so our future children can love with dignity and honour and not become greedy abusers like other nations who left God for wealth and lust?

Oh, warfare! Oh, killings of madness and O blinded eyes of men who follow orders to kill and hate! What did the women and children do to deserve such cruelty and hate?!

Hold on to me, hold on to me my Lord and let not my prayers fall away from Thy mighty heavens.

Abandon me not in such dire situations for if Thou should leave me now - then who else have to weep onto?

I long for Thy company and to see her face once more or hear her voice again I would give all the world and whatever I have left of my heart and body.

My Lord! Why is life so cruel? What is this life but endless pain and hurt that makes most men mad with grief and fear? People have come and gone, centuries have passed by and all humans lived and fought as if they'd live forever and thought the world would end once they were gone, but life kept coming and all their wealth and houses were inhabited by people of the next century and the next and the next whilst everyone thought they'd be the last ones to live. One by one, all loved ones have gone away to You my Lord, one by one all those who loved me were gone, till there is no one but You and me, just You and me against the cold dark and silent world!

O my Maker! Oh, my Sustainer! Oh, my Cherisher and oh, Lord of my universe! Leave me not behind in this world to languish and suffer and mourn and rot away.

I find no reason to continue living this tormenting life, the heart is Yours and let my body return to Thee, O Immortal Lord of my immortal soul.

I love Thee, oh, my Creator, with all that love Thou hast made me with and long to see Thy face and feel Thy love- for this world that Thou hast cursed the devil with has nothing to keep me here any longer. All love has gone. I was no fighter and survivor like her who left me; I was the weak one, the hopeless one and the one too terrified to face a life where I were to live Without Thy love and Thy company!

My heart yearns to return to Thee! Let me free from this accursed world where only the soft-hearted ones are impaled with the merciless daggers of heartbreak and abandonment."

The young woman mourned away in solitude, while the elderly cleric became more and more agitated. For two days, no one had died in the entire nation. How was that possible? He called the local morticians and hospitals, and received the same news. Due to some miracle, somehow, no one in their clinics and hospices died in the past two days.

Suddenly, the old man was afraid. His heart stood asunder and his blood froze. He couldn't breathe! It took all the strength and the power of his faith in God to make himself breathe again.

He had heard from saints and stories many instances and description about the secret kingdom of angels.

His heart froze and every drop of blood drained from his face.

He lost control of his mind and lost count of the time it took for him to regain his senses in full.



Sadness and Sorrow

The first grey light of dawn was beginning to show in the sky and rather than finding hope in the morning sun, she broke down in tears, for she recalled the times when her sister would stand with her atop the hills and admire the soft and refreshing glow of the morning sun.

The elderly religious man walked over to the kneeling woman, and leaned down, making her lift her face to his own. She was not wailing now but tears coursed down her cheek.

“Dear child! I know that the loss of anyone near to us is painful, but you must know that Allah has prepared the most comforting heaven for those who lived and died in virtue and bravery. Your sister is in bliss in the eternal heaven of God! You need not mourn too greatly for her!”

The young woman's face was streaked with tears. “My older sister left me!” Alas! Where is she, and why does she not reply to my cries? Why did the hands of death’s grisly messenger summon her to the world above so prematurely?

“How could she have betrayed me? We were supposed to be together. She was meant to come back home today!” she sobbed in a loud voice, lamenting like a stricken toddler. “My Lord, she has left me, she has left me, and she took no pity on me.

Oh, Lord! To Thee I complain of her abandonment.

How could she have left me to this cruel and faithless godless world?

My Lord, let me join her in that world in Thy heaven with her and Thee.

Leave me not behind, oh sister, leave not me behind for I have none on the face of this earth who would even pity me but you. This world is for strong people only, for the ones who have the strength to fight and scream and survive!

Oh, heavens and earth! Oh, my people what right had she to leave me, what permission had she to abandon me? O sister, what is it that you cursed me with? Why have you left me to this cruel heartless world where men kill and fight for lust ego and wealth.” She wondered which deed there was by which she could obtrude herself into His divine presence and reunite with her dear sister and only friend on this earth? “Darling sister, how can we win this war?! The whole world has turned against us in a race and madness they have ganged up against us and have vowed to destroy our

morality by defaming us and framing us and make us appear as the attackers of the whole world!"

Her dismay at the loss of her beloved sister may well be imagined, but the elderly cleric did not expect her to break down both physically and mentally. The younger sister shut herself up in her chamber for such a long period, that he feared she too had expired from sadness, and when guests in her home who had come to solace her and share the loss with her, they could not think of abandoning her in her acute distress.

Her distant relatives tried in vain to impress upon her the futility for grieving so bitterly as to annihilate her own health and heart, but she could not control her sobs and reused to partake in any meals.

She sobbed aloud, speaking to her departed sister, "Oh, sister, you have left us but the world has not forgotten to hurt us and they shall not leave us until we abandon all morality and faith and honour and become godless abusers and nude seducers like them, until then, they shall defame us like they defame our neighbours and all countries who dare to uphold the laws of God! Man has become like the devil himself and has turned with madness against any laws of faith and morality and you O sister, have left us and our country is breaking down and I have none to turn to now, no hope to survive on, no mercy to count on, and no soul to pity the burning of my shattered soul...

Why have you left me here? Have you no pity for your sister who no one loved but you?

You who took pity on an enemy who hurled fire on us, and forgot her who you knew would have died without your strength and support!"

She burst into tears once more, and in her fragility, her head dropped to her chest, as if in a dead faint. At the same time, the wind outside howled, drowning out her sobs. "Oh, sister, did you forget me- in your love for others?! But what of me! Oh, accursed warfare! I feel the pain of every sobbing orphan and the torments of every lonely widow!

Oh, Lord, who knew that death of a loved could grieve the soul so violently that no fire or chemical bomb could have come near competing with a pain so brutal and so bitter!"

The Funeral

As the pallbearers prepared to leave, she stood by the spot where her sister's corpse had disappeared. Taking a few minutes to clear her mind, she stood still, hands at her side, gazing tearfully at the impossible, where piles of dirt had obscured the dearest one from her view. Taking long slow breaths of the cool morning air, she tried not to wail aloud and slowly exhaled the tensions of her intense mourning. Despite the brightness of the day, and the beauty around her or the peacefulness of the hills, and the serenity of nature, she felt only bitter pain in her heart.

“Sister dearest,” she tearfully bemoaned, “whose permission did you leave me behind with?!”

Oh, my darling of my soul! What could have made you leave me to this world of mad men! Of men who the world and its torment have made insane and into wild beasts who kill and prey on innocent souls for their own lust jealousy and ego!?

Come back oh, my heart! Oh, my soul, come back and take me with you, if it is the hell of my Lord where I'm destined to be, then hell it shall be, because this world is the hell of men and that hell shall be of my Lord's.

My God's hell shall be a trillion times better than the hell of men, for men are the worst of beasts while the angels and God is the most merciful of all those who have mercy!

My Lord! I put my soul in Thy hands and await Thy call.” She raised her face to the howling wind, hoping the fierceness of the air would blow away some of her pain, but as tears began to stream down her face again, her head dropped back to her chest, and her body sagged lifelessly. She did not move from her chair, her hands hanging by her sides and her hair drooping over her face. The howl of the wind resumed outside the house. “My Lord! for whatever sin Thou hast cursed me to live in this world, forgive it with Thy forgiveness- Thy mercy which even gave chance to the accursed devil to repent!

My Lord -for what sin of mine have Thou cursed me with this thing called life and this sentence to live on this hell called earth?

Take me, my Lord- take pity on my soul and forgive me for what I could have done to incur Thy wrath, that Thou hast cursed me to live in this war-torn world while allowing my blood sister to come to Thee?”

She had never experienced hunger before, and now, there was an explosion of pain in her abdomen, and a burst of light behind her eyes. Hunger and sadness made her fall to the floor, choking her breath amidst her tears.

“My Lord,” she pleaded with heaven, “my heart has gone mad yearning for Thee and thy love and care. Take me in Thy heaven under Thy guardianship for the fear of life has made me gone half insane with fear and a terror that no demon of hell could think of.

Oh, Merciful Lord of cast away souls! Leave me not behind for this world to swallow with its fangs!

Take me into Thy care and thy guardianship Oh, my Lord!

Protect me and my nation from Thy faithless jealous creation and their harms, from snakes and wicked men who are the worst of all beasts. And protect us from the godless creations of Yours who in their anger and jealousy will not let us follow Thy law or uphold the honour and freedom of Thy creed! Save us from their hate and their sight and make them forget about us and protect our younger futures generations from becoming influenced by their lies and defamation and from going astray ... Hold me in Thy forgiving embrace and reunite me with her who was so dear to Thee that Thou have taken her while leaving me to languish in the terror of a loneliness too severe for any human heart to bear.”

The young woman rose to her feet, her dark cloak billowing about her in the wind. There was so much she wanted to engrave on her sister's gravestone. She wished everyone knew that beneath the mould lay a warrior and a sister who took her glories with her to the grave, but like the keepers of flames that fiercely guarded their fire, she was determined to hold on to her sister's legacies and celebrate her memories, and never permit her life to perish in the cold forgotten ashes of the grave.

“Oh, my Lord,” she whispered into the winds, “why hast Thou taken my sister and not me to Thee? Was I not worthy of Thy companionship or was it that Thou didn't find me pious enough to attain Thy company? This world- is cursed Oh, Knower of all the known and unknown! Protect me and my nation from the hate of men and the hate of animals!

Let me come to Thee my Lord, I promise to be as sinless as Thy angels, just let me come to Thee for Oh, my Owner, the heart hurts, the heart hurts Oh, my Maker with a pain that no words could comprehend and only Thou knowest what ails Thy slave maid!”



Travel and Tears

In her sadness, she started for the road that was cut through the cypress woods that seemed in the darkness to be closing down upon her in great masses of greyness. The entire expanse was bestrewed with trees, and produced a markedly solemn effect, and when the wind blew over these hills, and forest leaved rustled, to her it sounded as though a thousand dirges were echoing her grief in solidarity.

“Take pity on my soul, O Lord,” she begged from her Maker, “for Thy creation is merciless indeed! The weeping of widows and the wailing of orphans does not stop their cruelty and killing from destroying all the world nor does it stop their wars and framing and defaming. Nor does the sobbing of hopeless girls awake one drop of remorse or pity in their hearts which have become cruel with years of sinning and the fiery heat of jealousy and insecurity...

Save me, my Lord, save me!

Save me from the pain of human torment and a pain that makes all human hearts mad.

Hold on to me- my Lord, hold on to me and let me not float away from the grasp of Thy hand. Hold me close to Thee or else suffering and sin would swallow me whole.

My Lord! leave me not behind when Thou hast taken her who meant all the world to me?

Oh, why had Thou given her to me only to take her away?

Oh, Lord of my aching soul, I complain only to Thee, and complain to thee alone, for I have no one else to complain to! Thou hast taken away my very reason to exist.

Oh, how am I to breathe without pain that burns the whole heart and body with every breath I take?

My Lord, there is none to complain to but Thee, so I have come to Thee with all my pain and all the hurt of my heart!

Let not Thy creation know of me or hurt me for this pain is enough to weep myself to death by."

The young woman paused, and raised her beautiful head. Her dark cloak whipped behind her, as she blinked sorrowfully. It was past twilight, and with a faint glimmer of light remaining, she could see the moon beginning to appear between the occasional clouds, and in the midst of such magical atmosphere, the evening birds began to chirp and summon one another to their final destination. As the robins and egrets screeched, she wept with the flying creatures of the night.

"My Lord!" She continued to pray, "Protect me and all girls from Thy enemies and from thy cruel creations who have no pity left for the weak and helpless?

Let my heart find you! Let my soul love you, oh, Lord of the stars that burns without ending!

Let me come to thy Lord, Oh, stars of the weeping skies!

Oh, Lord! Thou spared the stars from the torments of life and the pain and hate of the world, yet the pain in my heart burns deeper and fiercer than any stars -and Thou have not taken me away nor has Thou saved me from this accursed life which men fight to hold on to.

Untie my soul from the shackles of life and the heartbreak of pain and suffering and unite myself with Thee, oh, Allah! for my heart longs to be with Thee.

My Lord! Thy name has been defamed by Thine own creation and Thy worshippers and lovers have been humiliated beyond all human imagination, yet Thou spared it not from the curse of life and living!

My Lord, I am tired, tired of weeping and tired of fearing the hate of men! I am tired my Lord, call me soon to Thee so I could rest in a heaven where there would be no more war or suffering or hunger or poverty and the wailing of injured children couldn't haunt my dreams.

The world is cruel, my Lord, all loved ones abandoned their beloved in the end, if not by death, then by hate until no one is left to live for.

My Lord! I have no one to live for and no reason to survive for.

The pain of living is too severe for my weak heart and I beg of Thee to take pity on my terrified soul for me! Will You have no mercy on a weak creation like me? Only Thou, my Maker who thought me worthy to be made and worthy enough to know Thee and call Thee by thy name, only am I worthy to Thee! So, take me where I am loved and leave me no longer in this vile hate filled world of cruel selfish strangers and soldiers and killing and warfare.

Hold me close to Thee and let me come to Thy heaven and let me love Thee, O God of my soul till I breathe my last.

My soul is for Thee -my body is for Thee -my heart is for Thee, my living is for Thee and my death be only to come to Thyself.

Let foolish men fight to live this lie called life till they one day long for death too.

Let this world be theirs; for a while they think they shall live and rule eternally, only for future generations to laugh at them and then believe in the same lies and continue the useless cycle of hate and love- life and death - pain and heartbreak..."

She was now alone in her home, as all her living relatives had perished one by one, and when she found the pantry empty, she sat on the kitchen floor and wept softly until her hunger abated. It was almost midnight, and she did not know if the sound of her tears would awake the neighbours. "My Lord," she bemoaned, "forgive me, forgive my weakness and the tears of a mad youth! The war has been cruel, indeed, and there was no one who fed me and protected me but she who was more like a mother than a sister. For when my mother was gone, half my soul faded away and with her nothing of me is left, O my Lord! Take some pity on my soul! Forgive me for my heart is too severely broken to ever heal! Oh Lord, how can I complain, what shame is it for me to complain when a million orphans weep and mourn and are more direly helpless than me!? But pain spares none and hurts all those who can weep and cry...

So, take me away from this world where it only mocks the living and makes the weepers weep.

Take me away; why should I live and burn in that pain and cry my soul away in fear only to die years later when I won't even recognise myself?

Oh, souls that suffer, and oh hearts that weep and minds that are numb with pain! Indeed, my Lord couldn't abandon me, He couldn't forget me.

He couldn't punish me when I love Him so!

If Thou should have kept more blessings hidden for me in the future then give it to another most deserving child, but O Lord- my heart is too weak to survive any longer upon this earthly world!

Oh, death! What a curse you were when you came to my sister and what blessings shall you be should you come to me! Indeed, death cannot be bad for those whose souls have not sinned, perhaps it is our only obstacle to eternal peace!

What is this life worth to me when you and my sister and mother are not on this world any longer?

There's no life but the life that is eternal in the afterlife; there is no worth in living in a world so temporary where man's turn is for but a few days" She could not sit at home, nor stand still. The very thought that her older sister was gone seemed more permanent if she remained stationary, and so she began to walk against the gusty wind. She walked aimlessly, her numbed feet carrying her kilometres at a time, even as she sobbed. She scarcely noticed that the land in the suburbs was more rugged on the far side of the pass, and rather than preened flower beds, this area was heavily forested, and in the distance the riverbed shimmered in the morning air.



The Little Sister's Anguish

The young woman shook her head. She must have become dehydrated from weeping so poignantly. Her clothes were stuck to her body with sweat and her mouth was dry as sand. She was afraid she would die any moment, and unwilling to perish so far away from her dear sister, she decided to head back to the national cemetery where all the believers were buried. Moving as fast as her tired legs could carry her, she skirted back along the edge of

the forest, and followed the track towards the mountain side, and headed to the graveyard where her sister was buried.

“Oh, my angel” The beautiful young woman cried out. “How am I supposed to walk above the ground under which you are buried. When you were my heart and soul and I was just a body too weak to love and too hurt to survive!

Oh, my angel what have you done to my injured heart? What have you done to my burning heart? Oh, I complain to thy maker of thy departure! My Lord, only Thou knowest my heart, indeed Thou knowest what no human knows, Thou knowest what pain cuts through every vein and what searing embers burns the human heart and attacks the mind with brutal agony of a fiery lava .

My Lord! My Maker! Oh, Sustainer of this vast unknown universe. Take pity on my soul and forgive whatever sin I may have done, bring me soon to Thee and let me love Thee with my heart and soul before the world takes it and destroys it.

Take my heart O my Lord! Take this soul which lives no longer in this lonely world but only walks upon it, and let me come to Thee.

I beg thee for a reprieve and an end to a torment too severe for human heart to bear, I ask of Thee for the last hope of tormented man- I ask Thee of Thy death for I beg Thee with my sobbing heart to bring me unto thee, Oh, my Lord what price shall I have to pay for death? WHAT price shall I have to pay to be worthy of Thy companionship. Take me -my Lord, take me with honour sanity and faith in Thee, before the pain of the world makes me wasted- forgotten -abandoned and hated. Take me to Thee before mankind pulls me into despair sin and disbelief.

O my Lord of the eternal endless heavens -which has no end! Oh, Maker and Sustainer of the vast universe! Oh, Owner of time and space and the seen and unseen, Thou hast taken her who was all the world to me, so I beg for Thy mercy thy pity and Thy love and to be taken to Thy kingdom while my heart is burns in the merciless fire of pain.”

Loneliness and sorrow beset her, even as she wept. Of all the surviving relatives in her family, the younger sister required the most soothing, for she was perfectly beside herself with sorrow. To the young lady, there was something even in the spectre of her despair that seemed endearing to strangers who noticed her for the first time. There was still the semblance of youthful beauty. The younger sister declared she would never sleep in that home or linger in that chamber again, knowing that she had to sleep in it alone; as death of the older sibling denied her the only melancholy joy left on earth, that of inhabiting the chamber over which the guardian shade of her life kept its vigils with sisterly guidance and affection.

“My Lord,” she bewailed, “how many more women will lose their sisters in this war that has beginning but no end? How many more children will lose their mothers before the world is satisfied? Oh, children have faith and patience for those who are destined for heaven must burn in this hellish world first to deserve that heaven so have faith and keep holding onto to Your Lord for we have been serving in this hell called Earth.

Oh, heartbreak that shatters the sanity of humans, who could know that life itself could be the worst and most deadly curse given to men who have hearts and tears?

Oh Lord, there is no reason for me to live any longer, no purpose for me to breathe, no use for my untamed soul to weep and cry and beg for food while my heart is cut and bleeding and my soul tired of weeping?” The howling winds seemed to carry her sad thoughts and grim fancies away into the wilderness and when the falling sunset threw the ghost-like clouds into obscurity, she hoped her sorrow would vanish like the clouds that melted into the night.

“Oh, darling,” she wailed, “what did you do to your own sister?! Why have you left her to this cold cruel world?!

Oh, my angel! My heart is too weak for this cold and cruel world! I have not the strength to shoulder this pain! This world Is not for broken and depressed hearts like mine! Oh, my darling, there isn’t anyone in the vastness of this cold world who would offer me some comfort or love me with your selflessness or help me without any return!”

The younger sister choked in her own sobs, as she recalled the final hours of her beloved sister, who had rushed into the enemy bomber jet which had crash landed soon after dropping the majority of its bomb load over the civilian administrative building in the centre of the city. She was later informed by the war ministry that her older sister rushed into the plane to rescue the enemy pilot who was trapped inside his cockpit, but as soon as she freed him from his seat, and tossed the wounded man over to the multitudes waiting below, the plane exploded and she perished in a blazing inferno instantly.

Thinking of the pain her sister must have experienced, the young girl began to weep again. “Oh, sister you have been most cruel to me! How could you have preferred the life of a stranger and an enemy over your own sister who has no one but you?

My heart has become mad, oh world! You have become successful indeed! You have made my heart insane! You have burned all the strength of my heart!

Oh, cruel world! O war and soldiers who think it’s legal to kill! It would have been better if all men preferred death to killing!

Woe unto you, oh, cruel hearted men who kill and bomb human bodies and hearts!

May Your Lord make you one day feel the pain of those whom you have hurt!

Oh, cruel hearted soldiers! What do you gain by killing the souls of human hearts! What do you gain by taking away the beloved of those who have no one else in the vastness of this worldly life?"

Her sadness broke the elderly religious leader's heart who was tasked to officiate the funeral services, and so he declared to the young woman that there was nothing to grieve so terribly about.

"During the war," he explained, "all rich men lost their wealth all businessmen lost their factories, all house owners lost their houses, and all politicians lost their political powers, and only the fathers -they lose their sons, and when the war is over, all the politicians shake hands, and become friends, all the future generations shall riot and hate the forefathers who shed their blood and sweat for this country and shall become friends with the enemies who funded this war and supplied our enemies with weapons to kill and attack our civilians, and after the war -all the business men shall restart their business ventures and forget about the past, all the rich men shall find more wealth and their homes and live in peace again, but the fathers only shall look for the graves of their sons.

My child, our enemies are counting upon our passion to make the heat of war and killing continue; they have framed men of our own faith and our own neighbours to kill us so we kill them back in revenge and so the killing and avenging destroys all of civilisation!

They shall never stop framing us to our neighbours and vice versa, and we cannot win the war against a thousand most powerful broken men who hate the God that loves them, and so hold fast to forgiveness.

It is said that so long as you are victim of war and killing and starvation, thank God every day because you are still the innocent one! Thank God for your heart is still blame free, thank God that He still loves you, thank God that you are still a human being, but the day you become a killer, beware for now you have become the oppressor and that is the greatest curse that can befall any human being.

It doesn't matter who wins for how long, it matters only who wins in humanity and in mercy for they are the true winners.

History says that the oppressed ones always win and that the prayers of the tortured ones are never turned away from heaven.

One day the millions of souls that died or burnt and the curses of their mothers and siblings and children shall come back to us as they will blame us and our preaching of justified hate and funding of weapons for their pain and suffering.

It is always the prayers of the oppressed which makes and breaks who will win and who will lose.

If we cannot stop the passionate justified hate of our politicians and media officials, then even when we are proven through our charities and justice as the most merciful nation, the people whom we oppressed shall make our enemies powerful and win over us.

Weapons and drones never won any wars.

Words of justified hate never win wars.

Soldiers and manpower never win wars.

Food supply and medical care never win wars.

Framing and blaming never win wars.

Propaganda never won any wars.

Tears of mother's whose children burn in their arms are the ink that write the fate of the winners and the losers of every war.

It is the oppressed ones, the hated ones, the despised ones, the ones blamed by the media, the ones who are attacked and whose souls are worthless to the world that decide which country shall rule the next century.

It is never the world leaders or generals or spies or arms manufacturers that choose the next world power."

When the Imam ended his brief soliloquy, the young woman felt slightly reassured.

Despair

“Oh,” the young woman wailed, “how I hate those who have tormented and killed my sister!”

“Do not hate your enemies. They are the victims too. There is always a third-party who forces the killers to kill and the victims they count on the passion of the victims to retaliate to keep the war going until all good men die, and all good woman are destroyed humiliated dishonoured, and all blood is destroyed and all DNA is changed.”

“It is pain, O my old mentor!” she pleaded. “Pain and the most brutal agony that seeks some solace and hopes for some peace and reprieve by avenging her blood which was worth more to me than my own, a million times over. Perhaps I could forgive myself or survive or find the minimal strength and will to live if her blood is avenged, and if I should forgive those who killed her along with a million of our soldiers, then I cannot survive the pain and only death remains as my final hope of reprieve.

“Forgive, child! Forgiveness shall make your nation win and it shall set you free!”

Hearing his firm advise, the younger sister broke into sobs of despair, fearful that she might never get closure should she be unable to exact revenge for her sister’s death, and weeping in frustration, she cried out, “What do you do, oh world, except breaking the hearts of humans who have nothing but heartbreak and pain to survive on? What have you done to my heart, oh world! How can you be so feelingless and so remorseless! Do you not hear my maddening cries? Do you not feel even an ounce of that pain which burns my heart into melting embers of liquid fire? Oh, people! You have buried my heart! You have taken my soul and buried her.”

She walked outdoors to calm her heart, but the wind whistled mournfully past her, intensifying her pain. A rutted track zigzagged down from the pass, and she blindly followed it, hoping whatever the path would lead to could make her forget some of her pain and loss, but pockets of frozen dirt was packed hard into the crevices where the setting sun never reached. An icy wind gusted around her as the air howled mournfully, appearing to grieve along with her.

“Oh, how can humans survive in a world so void and so lonely?” She uttered a cry. “Oh, Lord of the heavens that rains from my crying eyes! Why did you take let me be born away from Your heaven to a world where my life wouldn't be liveable in a place of war and famine?”

Her only sister was dead! It was such an unbelievable idea that she had to remind herself of it every hour. The younger sister stopped at the window and looked out at the lights of the city and the bay beyond, then went back to pacing. Her vision clouded from the intermittent tears that welled in her eyes. It seemed that in the darkness beyond her home, there was some light, but what had she been expecting? Her sister was gone and had died trying to ease the pain of others, because all she ever did was give other people comfort.

“My Lord, wasn't it you who made me so weak, then do you not know that strangers are cruel and I have not the strength to survive even a moment longer in the earth of demons and lustful greedy humans!

Why did you leave me sister? How could you leave me, and why didn't think of me when you went into that burning building? Am I not worth anything to you? Don't you know what your life meant to me?

Oh, sister cruel indeed are you. Cruel, cruel of you to inflict such unspeakable pain on she whom you reared and cared for only to leave and abandon in the end.”

She knew not where she was walking or how far she had passed into the threshold of the wilderness, but the shrill wind rushed ceaselessly through the valleys, even as sheets of rain enveloped her complexly. She tried to get into higher grounds, but the hills were so steep that, despite her haste, she could only walk slowly. With each aching step, however, she tried to wipe one more tear away and said, “My Lord, this world has broken my heart. My heart is weak, all the pain all the years of sadness all that fear and the carelessness of associates has made me a stranger in my own city. An orphaned heart in the body of a woman and a dead soul in the form of a living one.

What is this pain my Lord, what is this fear and this pain that burns my heart and rips my soul away?

Oh sister, without you who is there for me, who shall take care of me, who shall care for me in this careless world? My Lord! He cannot leave me! He cannot turn away from me now that I have no One but Him!

What torture did you endow on my broken heart?

Oh, Lord of the universe, hear my cries from above Your mighty throne.

Oh, Creator, this world is indeed painful for it only torments the weak and the broken-hearted lonely women.

Oh people, how can I go back to my house and not see her there! How can I bear the sight of her empty chair and the wardrobe of her unworn clothes?

How can I eat in the plate she ate in or live in the same room she lived in?

How can I walk above this gravel when my only angel is deep under this ground?

Oh sister! Who knew that nothing could be more painful than living? Who knew that life itself could be a curse too severe for man to live in?

Who knew that each breath could burn the heart and the tears would in vain try to extinguish?

Oh, heart of mine have faith in the God who made you and her, certainly He is still here, my Lord Allah! Indeed, He hears the wailings of every terrified being and He sees the madness of every broken heart.

Oh, heavens which weeps along with me... let me sleep under you tonight, for how can I ever return to that house where she waited for my return?"

Upon entering her own home, the beautiful woman found the place bereft of food or furniture. She had never felt more frail or hungry before. It seemed as though the hard ground rushed up to meet her, as she toppled forwards, pain tearing through her skull. She flung her arms out to break her fall, but it was too late; her face smashed into the hard tiled floor. "Oh, house who grew us up," she whispered sadly, "how can I be assured of my sanity, if I should see my sister's bed empty never for her to return to?

Oh, world, why do you torment those who weep, are the tears of tortured women your irrigation?

Do you not to take away the soul of the living by taking their dead and watch the remaining people cry into the path of madness?" Great rifts in the golden dusty mountains illuminated the skies as the sun began to sink, and she saw now and again the red and pink gleam of setting sun. Alas, the sun was setting but her sorrowful days were just beginning. "Oh Allah, centuries came and centuries will come by, the world rotates and the universe lives on, all those who were living died and all those who live now shall die, every lover and his beloved shall die every murder shall follow his victim, every King and every beggar shall die and be forgotten.

Every warmonger shall die like those whom they killed!

Then what worth has this life? What purpose can there be for me to suffer all the horrors and agony and the heart to sob into madness to live on- in this worthless world where all shall have to leave one day?!

Oh, heart that weeps! O soul that cries, seek forgiveness from the Lord of the heavens indeed He breaks not the broken hearted, indeed He feels the pain of every human whose hearts lose all strength and will to breathe..."

The young woman became breathless from her wails, and found a space at the bottom of a rocky outcrop, where at least she hoped she would be out of the wind. The ground was lumpy, and it was impossible to get comfortable, but she sat herself down on the rocky ledge and sorrowed for her departed sister.



Wandering in Pain

She wondered in vain when, if ever, her sister would be returned to her. How long would it take her to travel to the land of death? Who could tell the distance that separated them? Her devotion to her sister was beyond question in life, and unchanging in death, and she was prepared to brave whatever toil or labour to hear her voice again, and endure whatever pain that must be endured in traversing the thorny paths that lead to her departed sister's blessed abode! Would such a journey be even feasible? She did not know and her heart did not care. She was living in a dazed world where neither hope nor happiness existed.

“Oh, my darling my angel, how am I supposed to live without you?” The younger sister mourned. It seemed that her sorrow was exacerbated with the rising of the sun.

She could not bear to watch the sun, and envied the giant orb in the sky that had no need to weep or mourn the loss of a dear one. The younger sister rushed into the paths once more, and swept round the base of a hill which opened up to a narrow path leading to the lofty mountains, which wound around the city in a serpentine way.

“Oh, Lord of my screaming soul,” she whimpered, “take pity on my helpless body for I have none on earth but Thee, leave me not to thy creation for men are surely cruel and the world is only for the cruel and the strong, pity me my Lord for I seek none but Thee, my heart my soul my every breath and every teardrop are for Thee alone, let me come to Thee before the pain of the world makes me insane and I have no more sanity left to remember thy name and love by. My Lord of the world that You sent me in! This world -it is cruel indeed, men have no mercy in wars of this world, and those who flee to survive don't know why they fight to live this life?”

As she grieved, she recalled the words of the elderly religious cleric who advised her to observe patience in the face of adversity, and so she tried to stifle her sobs. The younger sister stood with her shoulders slumped, staring at her feet. “I have nothing to say,” she replied morosely as hot tears continued to gush from the corners of her large brown eyes. “I am dead in my heart.”

“Have patience, O my mourning heart,” the woman added after a moment, “have patience and have hope in the Lord who made this weak heart! Was it not Him who sent her to my parents before me? Was it not my Lord who knew of my weak heart and the pain that torments it? Was it not He the Lord of all the Mighty endless universes who feels my every pain that wrecks my being?”

Then, oh heart, oh broken pieces of my bleeding heart! How can you be hopeless when your God is ever living all hearing and all seeing, He never sleeps nor is He unaware, He hears- He feels and is it not My God whose name is Hope and Love?

Then, oh Lord of the hopeless, oh Lord of the abandoned weepers, oh Lord of the insane criers, I complain to Thee alone of a pain that makes the heart insane I beseech Thee to end the pain of this maddening loneliness which every griever suffers from!”

She was asked to be patient and content with her personal calamity. One elderly woman tried to dispel her sorrows by insisting that eighteen members of her family, including her five sons were all killed in enemy attacks, and her sadness was therefore warranted. A soft-spoken well-wisher added that she should hold faith that the Most Merciful God Who is

the Eternal Dispenser of Good, and pardons the most awful deed of man and beasts, would welcome her sister in His heaven's keep, for it was God alone who had the power to free her from this world of misery.

"Oh, Lord I ask only of Thee for who is there to feel my pain except Thee?" She prayed to God, ignoring all those who were in the vicinity. "Who is there who can feel that surging fire ignite my heart and the boiling pain that pours from the eyes of the heart and the hopelessness of a hopeless griever?"

While the sun shines and the moon rise and the sun sets, I shall never forget Thee my Lord, for indeed if I should forget Thee then I should forget myself!

I cannot stay home! O the roof the walls are a prison of the most gruesome loneliness where they torment me with the absence of her, for whom to spend one extra minute I would give my very heart away."

Each hour, her grief compounded as she staggered into her home, and wandered into rooms that were empty. Her late sister's bed had not been slept in, the window beside which she stood nightly was open and the little bird had flown!

War was death, and air of the battlefield was full of filthy black smoke that could swiftly obscure targets and engulf hope, and machineries with their weight and cruel barrels delivered death like an emissary. Tens of thousands of men suffered from gunshot wounds which were more apt to cause death instantly after impact. Brutal lead balls would flatten out in the air and strike the victim with a greater surface area, shearing off limbs and causing massive trauma with tissue damage, shock and exsanguination.

"Oh Lord of pain," the younger sister called out to heaven. "O the owner of souls who have no friends or family, have mercy, O Merciful Creator! Was it not You who made us with a heart which feels such madness and such pain? Is it not Your duty to listen to our wailing hearts and forgive us when we turn to Thee?"

Oh life, how cruel you are to the weak, how heartless you are to the heartfelt ones, how lonely you are to the friendless, how horrible you are to the ones who sees you for what you are?

My Lord let not that love that bounded us as sisters be gone with death, but reunite us under Your eternal home in heaven with You to love us and the end of every bitter heartbreak and agony.

How could this life be the end, oh Lord, surely I would have gone insane and my heart would have gone mad and my soul would burn into madness, if this life were to be the end of all love and family.

Death cannot be the end, my Lord, hold Your promise true and reunite every broken hearts with their family in the days to come.

Oh, my Allah! Shower mercy upon the hearts of soldiers who are forced to kill to survive and let them reunite with their loved ones in heaven where there shall be no warfare and no killing!

Oh Lord of every mighty heaven and galaxies! Let every mother and every sibling who died in sickness warfare or accidents reunite under Your eternal heaven where there shall be no starvation of sickness or pain or suffering! Oh, my Creator! Soothe the hearts of every orphan and let us pass this worldly test easily and quickly and return quickly to Thy heaven and Thy home and Love. Let this world not be the end of that love and that happiness and that mercy that bounded us, and let our life only start in Thy eternity."

Tears of Blood

"The world will go on because it cannot care for my pain." She sobbed, rushing into the mountain ranges to forget her woes. "Alas, oh my Maker, would that I would never be born in a world which has nothing but sadness that makes all men wish to be unborn!" Fierce hounds and wolves were rumoured to be inhabitant of his mountain range, but she could not care or fear for it, for her heart was deluged in pain and grief. The hills were forested and she was hemmed in with trees, which often arched over the roadway as though it were dark and deep tunnels.

"The heart grieves and gives no respite to the ones it torments into madness.

Oh, my Lord this pain has no mercy on my injured heart, for the heart grieves my Lord, it grieves into the madness of an unending and most brutal agony.

Oh, every soul which weeps by the night!

**Oh, every soul who forcefully pretends to appear sane during the day
although pain has long destroyed every sanity!**

**Oh, you who are depressed whose hearts have lost its loved ones and
cannot find any purpose to live on or fight on!**

**Oh, weepers and mourners of the world remember your Lord is always with
You! Call onto Him when you are attacked with the poisonous spear of
deaths and madness!"**

**In her heart, the young woman tried to muster enough courage to live one
day at a time in the absence of her sister, but it was proving impossible. On
the night of the day of her sister was buried, she was unable to rest or
repress her tears. Upon the insistence of some distant relatives, she had
retired to her chamber, accompanied by one of her elderly relatives, who
insisted on sleeping in her house to keep her company, but she did not
wish to be interrupted in her war with mortality, where death had hovered
at her door and stolen her older sister away. Well-wishers spoke empty
words of consolation, but her thoughts were already in the place where she
had last seen the pale but scarred face of her sister disappearing beneath a
pile of unfiltered dust. How would she sleep tonight? Would her sister be
able to survive among the dead? She wondered if the dead could dream too
or if her sister could turn her deceased body and gaze beyond her
surroundings. How could anyone live without a protective stone abode,
away from all living flames and warmth, or breathe without the gentle
rustle of innumerable tree leaves purifying the air.**

**"Oh, souls which suffers in an agony unknown to the strangers that pass
by, Your Lord is never deaf to your calls nor is He blind to the tears that
blinds your vision!**

**O Lord of this broken soul! What right have I complain to Thee when a
million souls of my country men have sacrificed and perished had they with
patience and without complaining! But oh my Lord was it not You who
made my heart so insane that these tears cannot stop its onslaught on my
heart?**

**Oh, Allah I love Thee for there's no one for me to love any longer! I love
Thee for now there is no one who loves me but You!**

Who else but Your love can soothe the madness of my burning heart!

**Oh, my Maker, could I have blamed Thee or Thy laws for her death then
perhaps I would have found anger to soothe my pain!**

**But it was my sister who walked into death on her own free will leaving me
behind!**

Oh, my Lord how cruel was she to me when she thought naught of the heart she'd kill when she let herself die!?

Oh Lord of the Faith that brought honour and dignity onto women!

Oh, Allah Whose laws and faith had freed the women of Persia from the pagan religion which turns animals into gods and humans into animals!

O my Lord, it is Your laws we fought and died for and the whole world fought against us, the whole world rallied to destroy our faith and pollute our bloodline with our enemy's sin and passion filled blood!

My Lord! Remember the pain of those who perished, before you take away Your laws and Your religion from our midst!"

She could not accept the fact that her older sister and only guardian was dead. When well-meaning women from the villages brought in items of her favourite food, she burst into wiled tears, lamenting that how was fresh and gourmet cuisine to enter her when her beloved older sister was in the grave alone, with only putrid cold dust filling her mouth. Alas, she declared that she could not and would not eat nor drink without her sister present, and when the people left, she began to pray to er God again. "Oh, my Maker! Oh, my Owner! Oh, sustainer of my soul! Was it not your laws that freed us from the pagan religion which forced every mother to marry her son? Oh Lord of Abraham was it not Your religious laws which saved the people of Persia from the pagans who forced us to bathe our dead loved ones in urine and keep it exposed for the vultures to bite chew and feast on, because the pagan religion claimed that humans had no right to defile the earth of the devil by burying our dead in it as we were more worthless than their 'mother earth'? Because they worshipped 'mother earth' and defiled humans by making them the feed of vultures!

Oh, God of Abraham and Adam! Was it not Your laws that allowed the women of Persia to finally be safe from the abuse and marriage to their brothers and fathers and sons? Was it not Your religious laws oh God of Moses that allowed women to veil her body and not stay naked and exposed like dogs and pigs in the street!

Was it not Your laws which kept the women honoured and dignified and not free like the dogs who copulate naked in the street?

Then remember this, my Lord, that it was my sister's blood and her life I sacrificed to bring back Your laws to my Nation when our former leader had banned women from covering their bodies and wanted to dishonour all women with forced nudity like the animals who are banned from clothing and forbade us from praying to the God of honour and dignity or uphold the laws which for 1400 years had freed us from the torment and

humiliation of paganistic laws which made man into animals and animals into gods!"

My Lord I do not complain to you about she whom you took away! But who have I to weep to - when my heart is breaking into a thousand pieces and the tears are burning the eyes of my soul, my heart weeps out to Thou, only Thou O Lord of my broken heart!

My Lord! I have no one else for my whole family war has taken from our midst! And she who was the only one left has also joined them!

A million soul has perished and the whole world has taken part in our destruction and they have become insane to destroy our religion and our laws of morality and honour so they could turn us into animals and dishonourable like those who have changed their godless laws into legalizing every marriage with everyone and has turned all sexual abuse and molestation and grooming into love. And now they have targeted our country by framing every religious person and law giver amongst us as torturers and abusers so they could turn our hearts against the very religion that honoured our women and protected our young boys from sexual abuse. Our enemies are merciless my Lord! They shall never stop until they turn the whole world into abusers like them and until they dishonour and disrobe the honour and dignity of every woman and turn them into mere animals, nude and open for everyone to seduce and abuse!

Oh, my darling! Oh, my angelic sister, your blood shall not be in vain, for you have hurt me indeed! Oh my darling did you know what you have done to my heart! Had you no pity for the sister you would have caused to suffer in your bid to save the very enemy who hurt us!

My Lord, when our country gets attacked in the future or our enemies come up with another plan or plot to destroy our nation and its religious laws of honour and dignity, then remember my sister and her blood and

remember the millions of souls that suffered and whose sobbing and tears outweighed the Persian sea!

Remember, my Lord, those who fought to bring back honour and faith in this country and let not our enemies take our dignity and honour away which we fought so desperately to gain!

Oh, sister why were you so merciful to our mortal enemy and why were so cruel to me? Have you not thought of me and my torturous agony when you were rushing into the arms of death! Remember when you defended me against those girls who insulted me in school?

Remember when you promised that we'd get a passport one day and travel the whole world?

Remember when we made a pact to marry any two brothers, you the younger brother and me the older one, because he would be too stubborn for your choice -so we could live in the same building and our future children would be friends and double cousins?

Remember when you came to my class in school tiffin lunch break and fed me your food because I always forgot to bring mine or had become too hungry and finished mine before meal time? Who will feed me now sister now that you are gone? Shall I suffer these bitterest tears which attacks me with the violence of a memory I cannot fight against as it drowns me into the bitterest well of agony?

Oh, darling sister there's no one to offer me a meal or hold my breaking heart or soothe my aching mind, I am all alone oh darling I am all alone in this universe for all has fled from this city as the fire of bomber jets is incinerating our nation!

But how can I leave you? How can I leave her without whom I had no one! No let the bomber jets burn us! Let the enemies and foreign soldiers kill me, let starvation cause my tormented heart to forget it's agony in the weakness of poverty! But I cannot leave the grounds under which you lay.

I cannot leave the home where you lived nor can my heart fathom the madness of a pain unfelt by any human before me, if I should be forced to see your chair empty and your bed unslept in, for how can I live in the house or let anyone else live in it - knowing my darling is buried deep under the cold unfeeling earth?

Oh Lord of my heart, take pity on a soul too tormented to live any longer on this accursed earth!

Oh, world how cruel you are!

Oh, world why did you send soldiers to kill us and attack us and take our religious laws away from us!

Oh, world why do you make men so cruel that they kill and bomb civilians without any remorse or pity!

Oh, world I curse the day I was born to live amongst your earthly days and nights!

I curse the day that brought me forth to this world!

For what have you done save tormenting the most broken hearts!?

Oh, world I long for the day I shall leave you, foolish are the men who fight to live amongst you for they know not what suffering and what torment you have stored for them.

Oh, world my heart is too powerful and my love too overwhelming for you to have any effect on it!

You cannot delude me or fool me oh world! My love is too strong and it can see through your tricks and ruses and it can find God and His love through all the deception you lay out for it.

Oh, world you cannot fool me like you fool other men, I have no love for you oh worldly life! You have tormented all the foolish souls and killed all the merciful hearts and kept only the passionate hate filled soldiers alive so they could destroy our nation and defile our bloodline and frame our religious leaders and dishonour our women by destroying their faith and dignity and promising them the freedom of animals, animals who are free to stay naked free to fornicate in the street and free to kill or abuse or copulate with their own family and their own children.

Oh, world how can any human want to live amongst you when they see that you only promise them suffering pain and unrequited love which turn into secret hate!

Go on, oh world, fool foolish and brainless men into fighting for money or fighting for their lovers who secretly despise them and will love their enemies the day they die.

You cannot fool me nor can you take me away from the God who made the mightiest eternal heavens for me and every tormented soul! It is He who has my sister and mother with Him!

My Lord I should have suffered myself into the most violence and warfare if there was no hope of You .

She was now herself looking out for the conveyance which was to take her away from the oppressive cavernous mountains and back to the home which she shared with her dear sister. But as each moment she waited, and expected to see the glare of light through the blackness, all was dark in this part of the town.

“Oh, world!” She cried out. “Oh, world who is more crueller than you? How much more suffering will you torment us with?

How many more rivers of tears and blood of innocent hearts shall you require before you give us any respite?

Oh, world! You have nothing to offer but the most severe cruelty and suffering unto the soft and merciful ones!

Oh, world indeed you torture every man with that which hurts them the most, yet why do men fight over living life in this hell like place called earth?”

This world is nothing but a few moments of life drowned in torment of the heart that makes every sane person insane with pain and an agony too terrifying to put into words. Only for a few days is the human life span after which every man who is born in your midst must die.

Yet, men fight to live in your accursed abide!”

It seemed as though the mountain range had separated two atmospheres, and that now she had got into the thunderous one, but in spite of the fear of the howling winds, she was hopeful for heavenly reprieve.

“How cruel you are to soft hearts of the world! How merciless you are when you make young boys into soldiers who kill and bomb and make mothers and children trapped for days under your rubble until they die of fear and starvation!

Oh, world how accursed you are making humans kill each other! How you torment young men until they become insane with rage and hate God with such passion that they frame every religious laws of God and every religious country of every rape and murder to make all the world becomes faithless and godless abusers and groomers and molesters legal like themselves.

These few days of life, yet how much pain can you inflict upon the hearts of men until they become insane and enslaved to hate and jealousy and a rage that destroys every religion and every innocent nation!

Oh, world take pity on my nation! Has not our blood quenched your hatred enough! Has not our screaming and wailing give you enough calm and peace? Must you continue your torture on a million other sisters who shall suffer and die in a pain more agonizing than death itself?

What curse you are, oh world! What a day it shall be for me when I can finally leave you?

Oh, God, this world of the devil that You abandoned us in has tormented most severely indeed! Oh, bitter was the suffering that broke men's heart and hot is the tears that streams from the eyes of every bleeding heart!"

The elderly cleric tried to ease her pain, by reminding her that death was not the end. He said, "All the blessed and favoured souls of the pious believers are free to roam and meet. They may visit and discuss with each other their previous existence on earth. There, every soul will be with companions of like nature for verily, the soul of the believer after death soars up to the heavens, whereupon the souls of other believers come to it, seeking news about those they know from the people of the earth. Since the souls of the living which are sleeping and the souls of the dead can roam in the spiritual world - for they are not tied to their earthly bodies - it is possible that they meet and converse. You shall be able to reunite with your sister in the afterlife, dear child, so do not grieve. Did you not read the Koran, where God says: 'Allah takes the souls at the time of death and (the souls) of those that do not die during their sleep. He retains those souls for which He has ordained death, whereas he releases the rest for an appointed term.' (The Final Testament 39:42) So, be patient and if your own loss pains you, then remember the events that ensued with Imam Husein and his family members. All members of the household of God's Messenger were martyred, the way your sister was martyred, and the sinless Hussein, was hit 45 times by arrows, 33 times by spears and more than 40 times by sword blows. Can you ever imagine what terrible pain he must have gone through? His body was trampled by the hoofs of the horses and his head was severed and sent to the pagan leaders who incited the entire mob to attack him. For those who are truly aware of the magnanimous nobility of Imam Hussein are well-acquainted with his consideration for justice and his valour to lay his life for the cause of truth, the pain is beyond words. But he still forgave his enemies, as you should forgive those who harmed your sister. This life now is the most important one, because what we do in this life, determines what happens in the next, and yet, a third of our life is spent in sleeping. While we are sleeping our souls leave our body."

"What is pain! Oh, this pain this loneliness makes me beg my Lord for a reprieve and death to come to take me to my Lord and Maker!

Oh God of my soul! Take pity on my nation for we have not passion to evoke You, yet we must beg You not to let us suffer or falter or turn Your face away from us when we pray! Help us against our enemy who wants to take away the freedom and honour and dignity of religion away from us and make us into shameless animals and only then will they praise us and stop framing us and attacking us and blaming our religious scholars!

This world can torment every man into madness and make them so broken and depressed that they become slaves of lust and passion and hate until the world turns every man into heartless beasts who Kill and murder for jealousy, ego, or lovers or out of sheer ignorance that's stems from Passion.

The wealth is for a few days, yet men suffer kill and die for it.

The food will all become the meals of worms in the grave yet people live and earn and fight to eat .

The lovers shall all find better lovers to serve themselves and worship them, yet men still fight and kill for the love of human who shall love one day and hate enough to kill the next day.

The health no matter how perfect shall all one day become sick and succumb to death fire and decay, yet people fight for a cure and medicine knowing all shall die in the end.

The fame is for but a few days until they become more obscure and more fameless then the unknown birds that think themselves famous for flying over men, yet people still fight for fame and honour knowing all those who honour them shall be dead and forgotten!

Oh, world how false you are! Yet men fight to live amongst you!

How worthless is all things you have to offer, yet you still beguile and fool the foolish hearts and use man's passion and hate to turn him into a beast devoid of human feelings and wisdom and patience.

You have nothing to offer me oh world, for she who could have saved me or make me find the strength to fight for life or live a little longer has gone away from me!

Oh my sister it is a curse to have a heart that cannot forget and a mind that torments me with memories that I cannot erase!

Life is painful o heart and I cannot find the strength to breathe for she who was my all has been taken away from me forever!

O sister why didn't you stop by to give a last farewell to my broken heart!

Why didn't you take any leave from me that fateful day?

My hearts darling! Why didn't you say that I would never hear your voice after that day?

Why didn't you say that you shall abandon me forever, why couldn't you find in your mercy to bid me goodbye before taking leave from me forever ?

There's is no one oh my soul sister! I have no one who cares for me for I am weak hearted and people care not for the weak hearts who have no hate or passion or strength to live and survive this cruel life!

No one notices my aching soul and my bleeding heart while they pass by me, unaware of the torment that tortures my heart into the depths of the most grievous hopelessness.

No one pities me oh darling, no one knows what ails my heart and what pain tortures my heart with the most violent agony!

Starvation has attacked my physical body but I cannot eat oh, darling, how can I eat when you shall eat no more?

Sister's Love

"Oh, my own sister! Oh, heart of my heart! Open your eyes one last time to bid me goodbye, tell me you're not in pain anymore that these burning marks do not hurt, tell me your in my Allah's heaven! Take pity on your baby sister oh my angel take pity on her breaking heart for death and pain has been torturing her into the most brutal suffering.

Speak with me oh my angel, speak with me and let me hear your voice, how can it be that you shall be gone so quickly without any warning and without any farewell!?

Oh Lord of my aching soul, only You know that pain that burns and sears my heart with the most grievous agony! No one knows but You! You made this heart weak and helpless and without any strength to defend itself against the onslaught of life and suffering!

Ode to hearts that feel so deeply and torments the mind so mercilessly! Why have you chosen me, oh, world to torment! Why choose me to torture me into the depths of madness and hopelessness!

I have none amongst the entire world who'd pity me in the least! None to have mercy on my burning heart, for the world has no place for the weak and the talentless and I am weak and have no talent but to weep and cry.

Why have you left me oh darling of my soul! Why have you left me to suffer, weep and cry myself into the madness of the dark endless night!

How can I spend this night above the ground under which you lay?

How can I walk upon the earth that covers your body oh my own blood sister! How could death take you and torture me thus! Oh, who knew that death could hurt so much!

Who knew that a death could torment the living with so brutal an agony that if felt by any other than man, then all animals and beasts should have died!

This world has nothing for me for she who was my only reason to survive has left me and she died, gone away forever never to return!

She who sacrificed herself to save her enemy but she didn't think of me, whom she also sacrificed in the alter of pain and madness!

Tears cannot stop o sister, these tears they cannot stop streaming for the heart cannot control the pain that inflicted upon it with the daggers of death and hopelessness!

I shall mourn you oh darling sister of mine own heart, I shall mourn you until my heart cannot take the pain any longer and ceases to beat! I shall mourn you so long as I have this soul in my body and this heart in my ribcage, for you were me and part of me and now that you are gone part of me is gone!

They buried me oh sister, they buried me when they buried you that fateful day, it's only my body that walks around and lives for my soul is with you in the graveyard where you lay or the heaven where My Allah shall reunite us, and He shall take pity on the souls who suffered for Him and were defamed to protect His laws and His honour and He shall feed us and invite us for dinner and we shall forget all the pain and all the suffering that tortured us from when we were so young and innocent!

My Lord let me break my fast with You and in Your mighty Heaven in a table with You and her who You took away from me! Shall you abandon me to the devil's world my Lord? Shall you let me starve and suffer in a world where there is no place for the weak and broken hearts? Shall you not feed me my Lord when I have fasted and starved because I have not the strength to eat or drink or even breathe or survive a moment without breaking down into the most merciless tears?

The young woman's relentless mourning made the elderly imam approach her with some advice, and he recounted the tales of the past when the family of the prophet was brutally tortured and killed. "Criss-crossing the intense heat of the Arabian desert and still mourning their loved ones, bewildered and harassed, these noble souls either walked or were forced to run, and the affliction caused so many children lose their lives along the way by slipping and falling down from the barren height of the camels in the desert where the pagan foe's cowardly acts of the evil forces that they would give water to their animals first then would the children of the holy family get to drink water along the treacherous way. Like hard core criminals, those women and children were bound in iron chains on their hands and feet, projecting to everyone who saw them along the way, the severity of their crime (which was nothing except standing for truth). Terrorised and tortured, the noblewomen and children who were yet to come to terms to the atrocities their loved ones encountered in the plains of this desert, under the guidance of pagan enemies, who had used locals from our neighbouring nation to hurt them, insulted those pious women of the past, and wailing, mourning and still in grief over the loss of their loved ones, they were paraded as prisoners as a prized trophy with the only surviving male of the family who was sick, and was made to walk or sit on camel back behind the noble ladies with their heads bare and handcuffed in thick iron chains with faces of their loved ones placed on spears as a prized booty."

The old man's words did not comfort her, and she continued to wail, "Oh, world of pain, give me some reprieve and do not torment me with so severe

a torture! Take some pity on my ailing heart! For I have no one to soothe me or comfort me in the vastness of this selfish world.

My Lord if I was born with passion or hate, then perhaps, I would have found some strength and some solace in the refuge of hate of passion to strengthen me, but alas I have nothing but pain and a love that torments me to the brink of the most torturous agony and makes me fear for the sanity of my own heart.

This world is cruel and cruel are its inhabitants! Cruel indeed are its inhabitants my Lord, take me soon to Thee in thy heaven where no man shall hurt us and no soldiers shall bomb us and no evil person shall try to take You away from us or defame us to the world for our love for You and Your religion.

Take my heart to Your heaven oh God let me love You and save me from this world which only knows how to hurt and how to torment the most helpless souls!

O Love! How can you make the heart hurt so deeply and how could make the soul weep so insanely?

Would to God that I was never born! Would to God that I had died before the anvils of pain could cut through my heart and burn my soul alive!

How you twinkle oh star! Do you not mourn her who walked under you just last night and what right had you to survive when the earth took away the soul of my heart and swallowed her whole?

Oh, sun why should you rise upon all others when your sun ray shall never reach my sisters eyes! What right had you to bathe the world with your warmth when she who was more worthy than you is buried deep under the cold dark grave?

The winds betray me my Lord! They all betray me, they hurt me the sun the wind the clouds and the stars, they deprived themselves from my sister but give their blessings to all else!

This life is hell Oh world, nothing except hell! For it torments everyone with only that which hurts them the most.

Sometimes it gives people some happiness only to torment them the more violently afterwards and take a payment for every bliss they gave.

Lost in Tears

Feeling suffocated inside the house, the younger sister began to march over the uneven road, but with only a thin shawl around her, she felt deathly cold. With her worn shoes, she kept walking. Eventually, fatigue and hunger overpowered her and she collapsed on a roadside bench and passed out. When the woman awoke, her stomach ached with hunger and every inch of her body trembled from the cold. There was no sister to speak to her, nor any relatives alive to give her a ride home, nor any nor any family to welcome her home. She stood at the empty pathway, gazing morosely at the scores of roads that stretched for kilometres around her. There were hundreds of narrow paths but none gave her hope for none led to home.

In this time of despair, she addressed her sister, hoping she could hear her from the world beyond, "Oh, angelic sister of mine, how can I ever walk on the ground which entombs thee,

pain has caused the heart to burn and tears have caused the eyes to become blurred and blinded, and anguish has made my mind senseless, Oh, world how do you torture broken hearted women?

Oh, merciless world which burns and kills men without pity or mercy, how long shall you make me suffer amidst your path of life?

Oh, Lord of my soul, O Lord of my weeping heart! Are not the heavens Thy own kingdom? Is not my soul made by Thine own light, hast Thou not breathed thy soul into this body of mine? AM I not worthy of Thy audience, O Lord?! The tears of bitter heartbreak and the terror of the severest storm of loneliness and fear drowns me, so I come to Thee with all my madness of my soul and the anguish of my oppressed heart.

Oh, Lord, I have prayed to Thee and Thou have loved me enough to let me know of Thee, and so I pray to Thee today on my knees with hunger gnawing away my body while torment fear and pain burns my heart and rips my soul apart.

I have fasted, O my Lord, for Thee alone to obey Thine own commandments, I have stayed away from all sin and all food and water and now the dusk has come over and the skies have started glowing with stars and the pain of hunger and weakness has taken over this weak body of mine, O Lord, there isn't a soul near me for all have fled in fear of bombs and foreign planes and soldiers, I alone stand amidst the ruins of my home and I cry out to Thee alone, O Lord for I have none but thee to cry to.

Thou wouldn't keep thy own creation starving Oh, god of the universe! Thou wouldn't keep me starving so I ask of thee for an invitation to dine with Thee my Lord -and my sister who Thou hast taken to Thy self and away from my clasp.

Let me break my fasting with Thee, O Lord of my hurting soul! Who can know of my pain save Thee?! WHICH human soul can know of my tears save the One who knows the hidden thoughts and fears of every tormented soul?

Take me in Thine care and give us a home in Thy kingdom near Thy residence where no death or bombs or pain or death or suffering shall hurt us ever again."

**A woman of complete perfection,
My sister headed to her destination,
Of purity and power and faith and race,
She sought to remove ill from this place,
With her strange willingness to carry,
And wield burdens beyond her duty!**

Thou hast first set out to that eternal night,
And I must depart to that land of light,
A follow thee to that lasting rest,
Unto the God of the East and West:
O, it must be so that I must go,
And ease from thee that final woe,
For my acute fondness for thee,
Is dearer than my life and me:
Alas, were it possible that I,
Could live with her in the sky,
And tour the heavenly cloud,
With a gesture grand and proud?
Alas, but she still had left our crowd,
Enveloped in nought save a shroud,
No hats or jewels to adorn her face,
Nor sunbeams shining over her place,
And all hopes and smile from her eye,
Dimmed and died like an April sky!
Ah, if my sister should again return,
Then my heart will cease to mourn,
And I shall know that all is not lost,
And this vale of tears I shall exhaust!

The younger sister was sinking in grief, and in shock, she stood in a daze, unable to speak or fathom the permanence of her loss. The women who volunteered to perform the funeral rites were full of attentions in giving her their support, but the young woman's knees seemed to be giving way a score of times and she felt herself on the point of collapsing on the altar steps of the worship place, where the prayer of the funeral were scheduled to be read. Her eyes clouded with bitter tears, she heard nothing, and she saw nothing and was cruelly dazed. Several pedestrians tried to guide her away from the perilous roads, and she went where she was led. When she was questioned about her relation to the deceased, they answered for her and every motion of the funeral seemed to expound her sorrow. Yet the cruel ceremony eventually came to an end, and the scores of people all

went away but she stayed behind, unwilling to abandon her only sister to the loneliness of the grave.

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Upon walking past the national cemetery, the young woman was reminded of her dear older sister who had departed from the world, and a stupor of sadness overwhelmed her as she began to sob bitterly. "Oh, my angelic sister! Forgive me if I have been ungrateful for all you had done for me!

Oh, sister, what I would give to have you back and to thank you once for all you had done for me! Useless I was, O darling of my heart, never could I have done anything worthy for you after all you had done for me!" She did not know where she should go, but her heart yearned to go as far away from this land of grief and death, and so she climbed the remaining height to the pass, overexerting her frail body, even as her face dripped with sweat, and every few steps heard her let out a small whimper of pain. Her body was in agony but her heart pained even more from the loss of her dear older sister. She balanced herself on the sides of the rough trees, but blood began to streak her hand from the thorns, but she ignored the stinging pain, and only wondered how she could bring her sister back. She pleaded with her Lord, "Oh, God of all the universe I thank Thee for giving me a sister and a guardian no human could want for more! Oh, God -for how could I have known that she'd leave me so soon without any warning?! How can I eat, how can I find the strength to cook when I had never cooked a meal in my life for you had done it all? Oh, my darling! Never did I thank

you and now you have left me! O indeed cruel was what you have done by leaving me behind to suffer and languish, in a pain so deadly and violent and mourn and wail myself to madness in fear and hunger poverty and humiliation.” Kneeling by her older sister’s gravestone, the young woman cried out, “Oh, my sister, who else in the world would ever care for me, now that you are gone from me? Oh, life, how cruel can you be, how much more torture have you hidden for me in the future?

Oh, world I curse you, I curse you and I curse the day I was destined to be born into this life and into your realm.

Oh, why hadn't I been left behind in heaven with the angels! Why hadn't I been spared of a life so torturous! Oh, world, what have you done to my weak helpless soul?

Oh, earth! How much more tears of my eyes shall you drink till you are satisfied of tormenting my soul.

I never wanted life, O world, and I only lived for my Lord to be one day worthy enough to meet Him, let me go from your existence, O world! Let me go to my Lord and Maker, for it is only Him who loves me, it is only Him who pities the helpless women and hopeless children, it is only Him I turn to when the world has turned its back on me.” She sobbed and shivered in fear. Rushing winds and roaring waves frightened her and it was during these thunder storms, that her sister reassured her but today, she was alone. The wind came now in fierce bursts, and the dead leaves and dust were driven with fury as it swept upon her in circling funnels. She struggled to remain on her feet, and at times, could not see an arm’s length before her. Fear and sadness caused her to cry in grief even as the hollow-sounding wind swept by her, brushing away her tears. The gust of cold wind seemed to clear the air-space around her so that she could now see afar off.

The elderly custodian of the nearby worship place saw her weeping, and asked her to go to her own home and rest, as remaining in the cemetery was unlikely to benefit anyone. She however insisted that she could not leave her sister’s burial site, until she could take upon herself the act of taking revenge, and told the Imam, “I must take revenge for the blood of my sister which have been unjustly spilled.”

“Killing and avenging may soothe your soul for a while,” he said slowly, “but the harm will be eternal and unending. Revenge shall make you forgive your enemy but it can never make you forgive yourself!”

“But how can I live without the closure of revenge?” She exclaimed, waving her hands in desperation.

“Think of our predecessors. What did the Messenger of Allah do? It was our own God’s Messenger who brought the faith and laws which honoured women, it was him who forgave his worst enemies, even when they killed his family while he wept and read their funeral prayers a thousand times - yet he never avenged their blood, even when they slaughtered his uncle and he broke down into maddening tears, even when they injured his closest female pregnant relative who were like his own daughters -he wept and wept until even the angels took pity on him, yet he forgave them when they starved him for years and went on to feed them -,when they stoned and whipped him -he forgave them, when they wrote every false thing about him and defiled his character by adding many women to his name and he forgave them as they killed him and assassinated his character, with his last breath he prayed for them! Learn from him if you are to follow his path.”

“My heart is broken, respected Imam,” the young woman said softly, “and I fear I shall die if I do not avenge my sister!”

“Yes,” the imam echoed. “The Prophet’s heart broke, and he too wept with bitterness as he wailed night after night- and he was hated then, hated now and yet his love never stops and his forgiveness knows no bounds. My child, let forgiveness rule your heart! How much more revenge can a soldier take before the whole world dies? We must seek peace, not bloodshed!”

Grief of Tears

In a sudden burst of grief, the younger sister started to weep again. “Oh, my Lord, hold within Thine own hands my tortured soul and forgive whatever sin I could have done to deserve a pain so brutal and take me to Thee, make me worthy of Thine own friendship and reunite her with me!

Oh, my Lord was it not Thee who made her my own sister, then why have Thou taken her away and left me to the cruel godless men of the world who neither pities the weak nor loves the helpless?

My Lord it is my fault alone that I am so weak and that my heart cannot even absorb the slightest pain, but oh, bitter is the pain of departure.

Merciless is the pain of abandonment and loneliness.

Take me my Lord-! stay silent no longer and reunite me with her without whom I haven't survived a day in this world.

What a woman did you give me, my Lord, as my very own sister! She who obeyed Your faith and Your laws and was sinless as the angels!

Every blame she took for me, for every crime I did- however small or big, every responsibility she took and every punishment and fine she bore in my place, every best plate of food she gave me and saved for me, every dinar of her earning she had given me without questioning without asking, without hesitation, without judgement or repayment! Oh, my Lord, I have not the strength to face this cruel world and this painfilled life without she whom death took away.

Oh, death how many hearts did you break before mine?

Oh, pity, Oh, mercy! How painful is this thing called death and eternal departure.

Oh, world! Were I to shed the hottest tears for all those whom you tortured with death of their loved ones, then it would have outflowed the oceans of every planet, but now I only shed tears for every orphan and for every parent who lost their beloved children, Oh, death cruel indeed are you to give only to take, to be born only to die." She thus wept and her death-bed request, was that she should be carried past her own beloved sister's tomb, before being laid beside her, there to await with her through the long night of eternity, until the daybreak of heaven begins and the shadows of despair flee away.

Trees and Tears

The unfamiliar paths were lined with prickly trees, and soon, the land rose, and eventually she began to see less and less people on the paths, as no other traveller ventured into this unmarked road at night, but she needed to move on and rushed past the last pedestrian, heading deeper into the glade. The wind was howling along the mountain side, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep balance on the uneven rocks, and so, she took off her heeled shoes, and marched barefoot across the rocky path, relishing the pain that eased some anguish from her heart. As the night drew in, she walked on through the cold until her sinews burned, then collapsed by the track, exhausted. She must have fainted, for when she awoke, it was raining again, and the downpour chilled her skin, but after hours of hiking, the rain drops were welcome. O, how the rain washed away her pain. It felt like the rain was scouring her spirit as well, cleansing the grief and misery that had gathered over the previous hours. How the rain eased her heart of sorrow, and removed the shadow of its pain!

O how much I am vexed and grieved,
But I know thou hast surely believed,
And though it be treasonous to laugh or smile,
We rejoice for thy courage to the hostile,
And with faith in thy God and Maker,
Of a loftier heaven shall thou be owner!
And in a joyful and deathless tone,
The brightest gems that ever shone,
Shall be for thee to gain and gather,
And heaven be thine, O dearest sister!

“Why did you leave me, angel of my heart?” The young woman cried out into the wilderness. “Tell me once, I deserve to know why you left me and abandoned me for the land of the dead?”

Why did you leave me? Why did you curse me to survive this hateful world?

How could I dare to breathe without you knowing well that no air of this world shall pump into thy lungs anymore? Oh, pain of the bitterest heartbreak, when shall you give me some reprieve and some balm to stop the flow of my tormented tears? How could I ever eat another meal while you lay under the ground, never to partake another meal?

My angel Oh, my part of my own soul, Oh, my only blood, how can I ever walk upon the earth's surface ever again when you O sister, are buried under this earthly ground?

How could I dare to tread upon the ground that now covers your holy face and body.

Oh, earthly grounds! Oh, earth and Oh, cruel surface of this world, I beg you with my heart and tears that could outburn the fire of the sun, I beg you Oh, earth with all the pain of my tortured heart! O earthen ground of cold dark graves and soil! Do not defile my sister's body with your earthly worms and decay!

Do not rot the skin of my angel whose body is worth more than all the stars and all the worlds of this galaxy!"

The young woman wept so bitterly than many locals feared she would expire from anguish, and early the next day, after she had risen and attended to her usual devotions, she was struck with her mortal illness, which was exacerbated from piercing sadness, and after languishing for several hours in agony, she gently passed away to her Redeemer and her God, dying alone in a lonely patch of land.

"Oh, earth! You are worthless and a place upon which men sin, and my sister is the slave and creation of the most Mighty God of Glory and Grandeur! Do not torment or desecrate the body of a slave of the most Honourable God!

God shall punish thee, O earth, for every wrong you do to men and children!

Oh, God Almighty, take her worthy soul up above the mighty endless heavens for it was she who defended Your faith and Your honour!

Oh, my angel, come back to me, don't leave me behind to mourn you till death should finally take some pity on me.

Oh, death, pity my tortured soul! Look at me with mercy and return me to the one without whom I cannot live nor breathe nor survive.

Oh, this pain is severe! Too brutal is its onslaught, too violent its attack and no defence has my heart against a grief so bitter! O which human soul could survive half the pain that tears and rips and burns my soul into a million billows of fire!"

The tearful mourning of the young woman was seen and heard far and wide, and the elderly religious cleric, who had been himself, deluged in desperate fright of seeing that no other corpses were arriving for burial ever since the heroic young woman was laid to rest, now decided that he

would not remain stationary any longer. The Imam knew that the younger sister would likely never forget about the legacy of her older sibling, and he was certain that she would carry to her grave, though it would be in distant years, the pleasant memory of the gentle sister who was dead, whose smile and affection so won her young and susceptible heart.

He waited at the altar after each of the five times prayers, and saw that no funeral services were required. The religious holy man could not contain his agitation, and once more, requested one member of his congregation to escort him to the all the hospitals mortuaries in the city, so he could see for himself if there were any bodies lying to be claimed or were abandoned by strangers.

The meek driver obliged to his requests, and one after the other, they halted at hospitals and in each mortuary, the Imam entered with great worry and inquired if anyone had died in the past two days. The answers were negative. For hundreds of kilometres, he travelled, and in each medical clinic and hospital, the answer was the same. No patient had died that day!

By now, the panic which had been brewing in the religious man's heart was expanding out of proportion. Five to seven hundred death each day on average, and now, not one person died in all of Iran! How was that possible? The imam wondered if God was sending a message to him, and his fear and apprehension increased.

He addressed his own racing heart in an effort to calm himself. "Oh, my soul! art not thou afraid when gazing above, beneath, around, thou seest God's hand stretched out in many symbols of human desolation. War and death are but a creation of Allah, and be thou not afraid of it or the lack thereof!"

He tried to wrack his brains to remember when was the last person buried in his presence, and he immediately noticed it was the brave young women who courageously sacrificed her own life to save the life of an enemy pilot. It was only yesterday that he looked on the features of the brave woman, and soon after she was buried, death itself had stopped! The old man began to contemplate of the occurrence, and his mind alive with thoughts which the truth from heaven had kindled. He recalled the terribly emotional younger sister who had been weeping non-stop at the burial site and refused to leave the cemetery. Indeed, her tears had made the old imam quite uncomfortable. He made a special request to the young women to leave the vicinity of the graveyard, so that he could lead the funeral services without distractions. Then for the last time, as the deceased were exposed to the tearful gaze of nature's tenderest affection the religious cleric informed his congregation that it was God only who could thus change the countenance of man and send him suddenly away to the afterlife. And the younger sister stood by the grave, the Imam continually

prayed to heaven, for the very idea that death had stopped was a shock that smote him, and his soul was dumb at the work of dissolution.

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“Oh, leader of our mosque!” the young woman began, upon paying her respect at her sister’s burial place. “Give me permission to take revenge for her who died! I cannot live with the pain of her blood going unavenged, either she shall be avenged or the pain of her death shall destroy me body heart and soul!”

“My child,” the old man replied gently, “forgiveness is the only thing that shall free you. Forgive her attackers; forgive those who funded this war, forgive those who framed our religion to the world to turn our own nation against God. Forgive men who cannot forgive themselves and their hatred and insecurity they force on others.”

“But I must! I must take revenge!” She cried out.

“Revenge destroys every soul! Revenge, anger and passion destroy every love and wisdom and patience and eventually ends in angering God. All bad and evil men were once good and merciful, righteous and just until pain made them passionate and their passion made them cruel and broken and their passion and revenge desired their souls and made their hearts dead!

Forgive -my child!”

In sadness and bitter frustration, the younger sister wailed into the night. “Oh, my heart and reason for living! What right had you to leave me to this bitter and lonely world! I cannot eat, I cannot sleep, I cannot close my eyes! Oh, my angel!” she addressed her dead sister. “It was you alone who nurtured me and you alone who have hurt me the most, indeed you have tortured me most severely by your untimely departure!

Those who love you hurt you the most, those who save you and take care of you, torments you the most powerfully when they finally leave you, selfish was what you did to me Oh, sister!

My heart feels the pain of every orphan -every soul that lost a most loved one and wept into the madness of oblivion!” She saw the plucked dead leaves, swirling in the gusting wind and wondered if these inanimate

objects too felt death and pain or grieved for their lost loved ones. She continued to pray to God. "Oh, my Lord! cool the searing embers of my burning heart lest I should become a madwoman in the violence of my heartache and pain!

Oh, my Lord -forgive me for mourning her-she who you had sent for me as my own sister! She whom you had picked out billions of souls to nurture me and defend me and feed and care for me when all our family were destined to die in a war so brutal and agonizing...

Forgive me for mourning her whom you had every right to take away...

Forgive me! my Lord but the heart is insane, pain it cannot contain any longer and the heart is heavy with oceans of tears it no longer has the strength to contain or the power to release!

My Lord! I am lonely indeed- and I am most powerless! I am helpless! I am a woman who has no friends and no family save Thee!

Then take pity on my lonely broken soul who has none but Thee to turn to!"

Farewell, thou who hast entered into heaven,
And welcomed reprieve from the rest prepared,
From the foundation of the world undeclared,
Flying to the serene and gentle spirits like thine.
I bid thee a farewell, O sister of mine!
Happy in thy life, happy in thy death,
O be happier in the reward for the final breath,
To which thy death was the assured passage.
O the brightness of that enduring fame,
Which thou hast won on earth to thy name,
Is but a shadowy symbol of the greatness and glory,
To which thou was admitted in the world of bounty,
And find a life of love beyond the grave.
Thou wert a woman so young and fair,
With a face stamped with love and care,
Having no cause to sorrow or cease,
Thou and thy siblings were at ease.

Thy errand upon earth was an errand of peace,
Thy actions offering gratitude and good-will to men,
And thou art now in a region of the sky,
Where hatred and strife never enter nigh,
And where the harmonious activity above,
Is not less pure or noble than love!

"Alas! My world has burnt down, my days have gone hopeless permanently. My sun is gone dark forever. There is no life for me to live, no strength no will no wish or dream for this world has become my nightmare, for and it has shown me it's true colours! Temporary it is, heartbreaking it is and made not for the faint of heart!" Wandering around the empty roads, she continued to mourn, "My Lord! This life is worse than all the hell your Scriptures could torment our torturers and killers with! Thy heaven hurts not the innocent women and children or the lame and injured, but this war, my Lord, it takes no pity on the ones it attacks and torments, for this world belongs to demons and men who are in the likeness of them! And I have no strength to fight to live or survive another warfare!"

Oh, world! Oh, heartless cruel world! Why do torture human hearts? Why do trample and torment women with pain that no mountain could shoulder!?" For long hours, she sobbed and meditated on the course of her calamities, and no ordeal seemed more arduous than to lose someone so dear and so fair.

"Oh, world!" She bemoaned. "You are cruel! Cruel you are, O world! Cruel you are to orphans- to siblings who have no one else in the face of the earth and cruel you are to widows who cannot forget their husbands! Oh world, how long will you torment us before we can get a chance to return to our Lord?"

Oh, God my heart is broken, I have lost all strength and all will to live. I cannot survive without her who made this world liveable for me!

My Lord, whose fault is it that I am so weak? Why does every pain torture it into the depths of endless madness and misery and a pain that could outburn the fiery suns core!

I am too weak to live on, I cannot fight and I cannot find the strength to survive or breathe or fight with this thing called life.

I have given up all hope and my heart has been shattered and crushed, my Lord this thing called pain? How severe could its torment be and for how long must I suffer without reprieve! Pain shall kill my heart and only the body shall remain for I have been cruelly wronged by life and every happiness has left me!

Oh, my Lord! Thy slave maid can never smile again nor can she find any happiness for she who meant all the world to her is buried beneath the earth she is cursed to walk upon!

Oh, my Lord! I have wept and cried out Thy name all night with the madness of an insane child who has been tormented and starved and broken and have now become utterly hopeless! I have called Thee my Lord and cried and wept into the darkened darkness of the cruel night so Thou should answer me!

My Lord how can I sleep above the ground under which my blood sister lays with the worms and parasites and rotten mud? Oh, Lord! This heart has lost all sanity and all sense! Pain has tortured me into the edge of madness and an agony too severe for any human heart to bear.

Tell me, my Lord, tell me Thou hasn't forsaken me too? Like my sister who cared naught for the ward she left to suffer into the madness of life and pain!

My Lord! War had taken my mother's soul while she was left buried under the bombed-out rubble of our once beautiful home for days to weep and finally die!

I had thought I would surely have died without her love and mercy! She was my heart my soul my only guardian and when I thought that sadness should kill me soon! Thou had made my sister mature enough and forced by war to become my caregiver, feeding and caring for me till war took her too!

Tell me, my Lord, that Thou still lovest me and forgive me for if should blame thee ever for taking away from me what was already Thine own!

But O this heart that Thou created me with! Oh, Lord, how can it make men cry and weep more tremendously than the most grieved child!"

As she mourned her personal loss, the young woman saw the elderly Imam walking with his cane, and in her desperation, she rushed to him.

"Oh, scholar and cleric of faith!" The young woman cried out earnestly. "Let me take revenge for the blood that soaked our earthly ground! Let me find some reprieve and some solace in knowing she has not died in vain or that her enemies who funded her death shall not go on to live and eat and celebrate while my soul's angel and my only sister lays under the cold dark grave forever dead and gone from me!"

"Hold fast to forgiveness, my child!" the old man replied. "Whoever forgives will win this war. In War, there is no winner. The dead soldier knows not who won the war or who lost it, nor does it matter to him, for he lives in another world in another life. Because we are human because we must exist, we must forgive. No matter how much, we are faced with

torture punishment and killing and murder, let our enemies not make us murderers and killers too. They have taken away our freedom, our dignity, our honour, and they have taken away our religion from us and the dignity and the honour that came with that faith, let them not take away our humanity by forcing our neighbours to kill us and forcing us to retaliate by more killing."

Desperation

When the younger sister cried out in a desperate tone, and said, "Oh, imam, do not bury her under this cold, damp earth for she shall be afraid and lonely! Oh, do not bury a part of me and expect me to live on the earth upon which she lays!"

The old man tried to console her that God did not abandon her or her sister to the cold grave, but rather awaited her soul in heaven.

The younger woman declared that her older sister had a heart that was naturally tender and ardent, and was thus sustained in constant equanimity. Each trying moment of her day, and every difficult era of her life was adorned with bright and peculiar virtue.

The religious cleric nodded in sympathy and added, "You sister have done well in her life here, and there is no doubt that her life is worthy in the sight of those in heaven. Have not read the Chapter Cave of the Koran where God informs us, "Say: 'Shall We tell you of those who lose most in respect to their deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought they were acquiring good by their works.'" (The Final Testament, 18:103-104) Rejoice knowing that your sister died having faith in her Maker, and did wondrous good deeds of saving a human life. God mentioned in that whoever saves one soul - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. (The Final Testament, 5:32) On the Day of Judgment, the Scale will weigh all our deeds, good and bad. This will determine whether we are the people of sorrow or the people of Paradise, and your sister shall have great rewards on that scale. So, my child, do not despair."

Sighing tremulously, the young woman prayed to God. "Oh, Allah it was for Thy laws and Thy religion for which she sacrificed her life! It was she who defended Thee when the whole world joined the devil and rebelled against Thy Religion and Thy laws!

So, keep her in your eternal home! Keep her OH, Lord in that eternal heaven and forgive me when I cannot watch her be buried!

Oh, sister who was my all! What is this pain that love can give which even the most violent torture couldn't inflict a pain so severe and an agony so brutal?

Why have you left me to a world so cruel and so hateful towards the weak and towards the worshippers of the God of Love?"

Hills thick with trees disappeared behind her, and she crossed the harsh grounds. An owl swooped overhead but did not call to her. The world was lapsing into silences that stretched out for longer periods of time until she fell into a steady quiet, punctuated by her own regular breathing and irregular sobs. She stumbled several times, walking in a daze toward a north-south range of hills and the den of caves. Pale, splintered moonlight sifted through the leaves and branches, and though fear chilled her bones, she was too bereaved with her sister's death to notice the dangers lurking around.

"Oh, pain that rips the human's heart apart! When will you stop tormenting the soul who know no language but weeping? Take me to you my Lord, let Your love calm my aching soul and calm my burning heart. Let hopes of Your heaven cool my eyes and the eye of the million soul of my nation that has perished in this war...

Oh, nightly sky! How does my beloved lay in the dark cold grave? Alone and surrounded by the dead while I live under your false blissful lie?

Oh, world, you have betrayed me most terribly! You have taken her away without whom you knew I couldn't live a day in your upsetting world!

You have hurt my heart most cruelly when I had never done any harm to you or any other!

What right had you to take away her who was my very soul, without whom knows not how to live or breathe or eat or survive!

My Lord! My Allah Lord of broken hearts who are hated by the world and humiliated by all those who hate You! Forgive me for being so weak but this heart that Thou made me with- is not in my control, the pain takes over the human soul and it tortures me! Oh, my Lord it hurts without pity without mercy my heart tortures me with agony that if distributed amongst a billion souls- they would wish for death to free themselves from an anguish so merciless and so bitter and cruel."

**So do those oracles irradiate with their beams,
Or faithless ones fabricate from their dreams,
Creating stories from pagan customs,
Defying Allah's love and His Wisdom?
The gloom and darkness of a sinful world,
Rejects the beauty of Allah's Word.
From God did come those oracles divine,
Gifted from the Maker of every star and sign!
Whose essence is real and Love, eternal,
And mankind in Allah finds a Forgiver!
Neither shall there be days of retribution,
For the God of justice is a God of compassion,
Nor retributive justice shall humans earn,
And all shall come to pass; and from Him learn!**

**O thou most excellent of all created beings!
Messenger and apostle of the King of kings!
To whom but Allah can mankind flee,
When the war and death is upon me?!
The day is done; and slowly from the scene
The stooping sun upgathers his sheen,
And over the valleys of gold and green,
Persia's rivers and rains are aquamarine;
We drink its water, from the mantling river,
Defending the regions as its well-wisher
Etched with the shadows of a sombre life,
One moment so near to every mortal strife?**

“Oh, Persia! Your songs have all stopped and now been replaced with the wailing of broken hearts whose loved ones were all forcefully taken from her!

Thy enemies have won, my Lord! They have killed us and threatened our neighbours to attack us and framed us as attackers and killers to the world and has now even won over the hearts they have killed and is taking away all the ignorant ones away from Thee with misinformation and preaching hatred towards Thee my God and lied to my nation about loving them while funding every war to destroy them!

They have won! They have taken away my heart from the inside of my soul! They have taken away every hope and every happiness away from a million souls that died for Thee my Lord!

Oh, God I sought permission for blood revenge but alas how can I take revenge upon an enemy who are the victims of the same entity?”

Upon hearing her outburst, the elderly religious cleric who had officiated the funeral service felt a twinge of panic in his heart, as he hoped that peace would eventually prevail over Persia and no more bloodshed or hate would take place in the nation of Iran.

He tried to explain to the younger woman that revenge was a futile endeavour. “Hate not your enemies with too much passion, and too much vengeance. Soon afterwards, our enemies may turn into our friends who will help us against the real enemy who forced them to kill us. In war, you will blame the wrong people, and the people who you think are killing, - will not be the ones killing you, but it will be someone else using their name and their flags.”

“Ah, but I have no hate to give me the strength to live!” the younger sister exclaimed with emotion. “I have no power to survive because all the fuel of hate is gone and only the tears of an extinguishing pain remain!”

The Imam once more told her gently, “Hate not your enemies because the progeny of your enemies who are born into your country who will rule your country for the next hundred years and if they should do those crimes their fathers did then they shall dishonour our nation and humiliate our country because they shall be our own citizens with foreign blood.”

“Oh, Allah!” the woman cried out in desperation. “O Owner of my heart and maker of my soul! They buried her under the earth! They took her away from my bosom and buried her under the earth! They do not understand what pain shatters my soul and what wailing burns alive my mind and numbs my heart into madness and despair! Only Thou Oh, Lord of tortured souls! Only Thou knows what pain is! What pain it is to see her who was my all be buried under the cold hard ground upon which enemy soldiers trample and march! Tell me Allah tell me she is with You! I want nothing of life or living -I seek not wealth or love! I seek only from Thee that Thou

should keep her safe in Thy mighty eternal heaven and reunite our broken hearts and save our faith and our laws of honour so no women must suffer like us after we are both gone away from the history of life!

My Lord hunger is painful indeed, and I have fasted in this heated June day through a most maddening pain so that Thou would take pity on the soul which meant to me more than all the world!

My Lord of that vast endless universe, I have fasted and am too weak to walk for despair and sadness took all my soul away! My Lord of Might and Glory whose mercy and love shall make us forget all pain and suffering! Help me for there is none to help me now that she is gone from me!"

When all Deaths Halted in Iran:

The old Imam had been leading funeral prayers since his first day in the job, which was slightly over fifty years ago.

Never had a day passed in his working life that a funeral prayer request did not arrive at his mosque, and yet, despite a war raging in Tehran's doorstep, and with nearly a million casualties already buried, with an average of fifty to hundred youths per day, he was astonished to find that not one person had died in his city.

Fearing that there has been a communication failure due to enemy aerial bombardment that caused telephone lines to malfunction, the old man began to go from one hospital to another, scouring the interior of hospices and intensive care units where fatally wounded patients await to depart from this painful world.

The cleric entered the city's metropolitan hospital, where on average, a hundred corpse arrived to his locale for burial rites.

His light grey eyes wandered unremittingly, with a strange expression of terror and suspicion, darting from person to person, and scrutinising object to object, his face rotating to all parts of the room. It seems that he was perturbed beyond words, and finally upon noticing a male medical attendant, he gestured urgently, and in a harsh whisper, inquired, "Is there anyone today?"

The old man waited, his breath becoming heavy with anxiousness, as he inquired once more, but the background of his question was lost to the nurse.

"Anyone today?" He repeated, as though the old man had lost his senses.

"Death!" Cried he, wringing his hands in anguish. "Had anyone in this life support unit died today?"

“No, my respected elderly man,” the clerk announced with a glimmer of joy. “We lost no one today, thank God!”

The image of the wounded patients, as they lay languishing on the hospital beds disturbed the old religious cleric, and he paused by the medical ward and whispered the prayer of Fatiha, reciting the seven verses of the first chapter of the holy Koran, saying blessings for their speedy recovery.

But the strange phenomenon dwelt upon his mind the whole day preceding for he was not conscious of being able to sleep at all due to inward panic. Now, much exhausted and fatigued, he arose from his rectory and began to make rounds among his parishioners, who curiously did not show up with their usual deceased ones at the time of dawn prayers. The religious cleric waited until the noonday prayer time, when the sun was shining brightest, and men took siesta in their homes.

For many decades, the old man believed it was his intelligence that revived his spirits and his strength, and he got through the day of prayers with serenity and composure, but today’s events, or the lack thereof, was something he could not reconcile with.

Mourning

Men and women who had gathered to mourn the death of a young woman who had willingly given up her life without hesitation to save the lives of several men, until upon trying to rescue an enemy soldier from a burning plane, she herself was killed in the explosion. Her brave deeds stirred the hearts of the congregation, and when they saw her younger sister who was weeping bitterly, they wished to learn more about the heroine who passed away.

“My most pleasant recollections of earliest days are associated with my older sister,” the younger woman said haltingly. “I remember standing with her and counting the stars, or looking out at the vast masses of clouds, where plain vapour rising one over the other, appeared like mountains in

the skies. There are no incident or action in my life which was not stamped with the tender recollection of my lost sister. Oh, what a loss! How must I live now?! I feel as if I should have been another creature had she been spared to me, for then I should have believed that I was truly beloved."

There was so much she had yet to say to her departed sister and friend. But to think that her sister's lifeless body was beneath those heaps of dust, she shivered in sorrow, and rushed away in to the wild winds. She gazed sadly at the distant hills until her tears obscured her view, and the mountainous hills were themselves lost in the distance, where far away from civilisation, snowy peaks gradually rose over the nation's borders.

"Oh, Lord of hearts that know no ease and minds that know no peace! Starvation has set in and my heart hungers but there's isn't a soul around who could have offered me a morsel of food! My Lord I am too honourable to beg from my neighbours who themselves are starving too and whose children go hungry day and night! I feel humiliated to beg of them for they indeed would starve themselves to offer me a meagre meal!" The young woman sobbed and noticed there were dark, rolling clouds overhead, and in the air the heavy, oppressive sense of thunder was present, and it seemed as though the heavens were prepared to grieve along with her. "Oh, Lord of broken hearts! Oh, Lord Who quenches the thirst of those who are thirsty and who gives food to the beggarly! I beg Thee for a morsel of food but have no strength or power to eat it without throwing up! Guilt and pain have taken all ability to eat away from my body so I seek from Thee some food to break my fasting! I seek from Thee some food to feed my hungry and weak body! Oh, Allah, you wouldn't starve a woman who has held onto honour and faith through every pain and agony! So, take me to Your eternal heavenly home Oh, Allah, and feed me and my sister and mother and father a dinner, a meal of many items and a hearty feast wherein You oh, God shall be our host and we shall forget all the wailing and all the pain that tortured us and all the terror and fear of warfare that made us go towards insanity with the most agonising torment!"

O how my tears fell, and my senses failing,
How oblivious I was to when thou wert dying,
With a heart unused to loss and despair,
Thy spectre was with me everywhere!
And long where thou art lying in death,
Dearest sister, restore thyself to breath,
For my tears the cold earth would deluge,
And no death shall be my sorrow's refuge!
O which better heart than thine,

Was laid to earth, O sister of mine!
Few understood and even fewer knew,
That thou wert kind, concerned and true.
There is a gloom on every glade
Sadness echoing in every shade,
My home is silent and lonely now,
Grief and guilt cloud my brow!
The Persian gulls in the gale,
Sing mournfully like a wail,
I look wearily at the street,
With tears dripping at my feet!
Dearest sister departed from me!
Bright be the grass above thee,
O Comrade of my better days!
Who can bestow upon thee praise?
For none adored thy heroic action,
Nor knew how to love thy dedication!
Thy memory bids me weep here,
For none I had held more dear,
Nor thoughts nor words of thee,
Can relinquish from my memory,
And sorrow is sunk too solemnly,
For one mourning a sister like thee.
How shall I awake each morrow,
And find thee gone like a lost arrow,
Away, to share my joy and sorrow,
How shall I live with that woe?!
Well may I mourn thy life and thee,
And place curses upon that enemy,
Whose scoundrel sting made the void,

**And thy joyful life, it destroyed!
Though heavy is my load of pain,
I weep and wail for thee in vain,
To know that thou hast left us,
I feel fate having thus bereft us,
No consolations for me remains,
Nor comrades to ease my pains!**

“Alas! Why did you have to die, dear sister?”

“Death is something no one can escape from,” called the religious cleric, who had overheard the young woman’s wails. “There are many places in the Koran, where God mentions death. Have you not read the chapter of Prophets in the Final Testament, where announces, ‘Say: Verily, the death from which you flee will surely meet you, then you will be sent back to (Allah), the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will tell you what you used to do.’ The stupors of death are painfully felt by all except those who died as martyrs or sacrificed their lives for the betterment of humanity, and so, you may appease your grief knowing that your sister suffered not at death.”

“Yes, but my sister was so young!” The woman protested. “Why did she have to die?”

“It is a reality of life, that all mortals must dies, where they be young or old, for in Chapter of the Prophets, God declares, ‘And we granted not to any human being immortality before you (O Muhammad), then if you die, would they live forever? Everyone is going to taste death, and We shall make a trial of you with evil and with good, and to Us you will be returned.’ (The Final Testament, 21:34-35) and also ‘(He) Who created death and life, that He may test which of you is best in deed. He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.’ (Chapter Kingdom of the Final Testament, 67:2) Repeatedly, God reminds mankind of their duties regarding death and the effect it should have on us. But we must not be afraid of dying, because when the believing servant of God is leaving this world and going onto the Hereafter, angels with white faces - as if their faces were in the Sun - descend upon him. With them is a shroud from the shrouds of Paradise and perfume for embalming from the perfume of Paradise, so they sit away from him at the distance the eye can see and then the Angel of Death comes and sits by his head and says: ‘O good soul, come out to forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure.’ He said: “So it comes out, just as a drop flow out from the mouth of the drinking vessel, and he takes it but does not leave it in his hand even for the blink of an eye until they take it and places it in that

shroud, and that perfume, and there comes out from him a smell like that of the best musk found upon the face of the earth. So they ascend with the person's soul and they do not pass by any group of Angels except that they say: 'Who is this good and pure soul?' So they reply: 'So and so, the daughter or son of so and so,' with the best of his names which he used to be called by in this world, until they come to the lowest Heaven, and ask that it should be opened for him, so it is opened for him, they accompany him through every Heaven until he is taken up to the seventh Heaven, and Allah the Al-Mighty says: 'Write the record of my slave in Signifying highness and return him to earth to his body.' Then they say: 'Who is your Lord?' So he will say: 'My Lord is Allah.' So they will say: "What is your faith?" He will say: "My faith is Islam." So they say: "Who is the man who was sent amongst you?" So he will say: "He is Allah's Messenger." So they say: "How did you come to know that?" So he will say: "I read the Book of Allah, and believed in it, and attested to it." So a caller will call from Heaven: "Indeed My servant has spoken the Truth, so spread a place for him in Paradise, and open a door to Paradise for him, so some of its fragrances and scents come to him and his grave is extended as far as the eye can see." He said: "A person with a Handsome face, and beautiful clothes and good smell comes to him and says. 'Receive good news, which will please you. This is the day which you were promised.' So he says to him: 'Who are you? since your face appears to signify good.' So he shall say: 'I am your righteous actions.' Thus, a man or a woman's pious deeds such as the kind of sacrifice your sister did, shall remain with her forever, and she will never feel any pain nor face any sorrow."

YOUNGER Sister's Tears

She cried aloud. "How can anyone continue living when they who grew them up is gone forever?!" Addressing her dead sister, the young woman added bitterly, "Oh, my heart, how am I to survive this cruel unfeeling world, where the enemies are coming from every side to occupy and manipulate and torment us, and you have left me with them at the mercy of our enemies when I was no warrior and no fighter but an unfortunate weak soul! War makes people weak and so terrified, that no human soul can they trust any longer!

Why have you left me at the mercy of a world so cruel and so careless to the weak and to the helpless and to the worshippers of God?!"

Now, with her only sister dead, no telltale terror could upbraid her and only a reproaching conscience stung her heart as she reflected on the many lost opportunities she could not spend in her sister's company.

"Oh, my sister!" She remarked, "There is no hope for me but a fear that is making my heart break down and I have more strength to stand or survive or even hope. Indeed, what strength it takes to even dare of hoping when warfare ravages us from every side and the soul cries awake from nightmares after nightmare not knowing whether it's reality or not!

Every breath becomes painful, oh sister! I sit outside all night under the sky, under the God who abandoned me and my nation in what seems like forever!

I couldn't live without you! I couldn't go home and look at the empty bed!

Oh, my sister! How could I not die out of pain and an agony that shall burn my soul away, if I were to look at your room and not see you in it?!"

With her sister present in her life, she had expected eternal hope and happiness, and now, with her dear sibling's corpse lying ahead, she realised that to have expected her to live forever was a vain thing, for there was no immortality nor permanence. None! Her only sister was gone, gone to a far country of evergreen ferns and festive flowers, where she was doubtlessly preparing a place for the little sister who never strayed far from her assured shadow.

"Oh, my darling is it true?!" She said suddenly. "Have you really left me! Forever? Then why were you born and why were we born if only to die and be forgotten? Have you really abandoned me and left me with no mercy and no Remorse?!"

Oh, sister! What betrayal have you done to me! Have you really not one drop of pity for my soul?! Had you really preferred strangers over her who you knew would have suffered a life more painful than death had you gone away!

Have you really gone from me forever? Shall I never see your face or hear your voice or see you walk and laugh again?"

She wondered if her sister was content in the land of death, and if she was prepared to receive her in those happy regions with as much joy and sincere a welcome, as they had shared while meeting after small trips and brief separations?

"Oh, world, how cruel can you be to have done this to me?" the younger sister thus addressed the world. "Oh, God of the universe! Pity my soul! For there is none amongst Your vast world to know of my pain! and she who you had sent to protect me has gone from me without my permission! She has gone, my Lord! She has gone from me forever -never to return, never to come back, never to make my breakfast and never to take care of me or listen to my worries and soothe my pain!

Oh, Lord, of my tortured soul! Take pity on a soul so hurt and so broken, for You are the only hope of the broken ones! My Lord, this war is brutal indeed so I weep for every soul that weeps and I feel the pain of every sibling who lost their only guardian! Become the guardian and safe keeper of every orphan and every sibling who lost their very souls in grief and a most merciless pain! Oh Lord so long as You exist man cannot lose hope nor become yet rely insane! Thou art the hope of every hopeless, the light and beacon of every blinded one and the Beloved of every heartbroken one! Hear my calls and take me soon to Thee and keep me safe and forever in Thy kingdom for eternity for this world was not made for the merciful or the human souls that feels and weeps and grieves!"

The old man's eyes crinkled with emotion when he heard the lamentation of the young girl, for he had led thousands of funeral services, and helped bury children whose parents were wailing, but never had he seen someone more emotionally broken and sad.

Addressing the young woman, he said heavily, "I feel very much for you, and am exceedingly sorry that I cannot offer you more sympathy in this very trying crisis, but while you have indeed lost a dear sister, I know that you have with you another and a better Friend, a God of Might and Majesty, Who can say to the dead, 'Arise and live!' and so it is done, and that Deity is with you now and here, and shall be your protector and guardian in the absence of all your earthly comrades."

Ah, how the younger sister wished the words of this old cleric could assuage the sorrow that was so centred in her heart!

O how she longed that it may please that Almighty God thus to address her sister and raise her from the land of the dead!

The affectionate and fond fatherly tone of the elderly religious Imam momentarily gave her hope, but she could not cope with the loss of her beautiful and beloved sister, who was her strength and stay.

All she wanted was to speak to her sister once more. "Soul of my soul, heart of my heart, blood of my blood, answer me!" She said in anguish. "Oh, my heart's darling! Answer your own sister!"

Oh, death! Do not make my angel mute and dumb! Oh, earthen floors, I beg of you not to hurt the body of my angel with your worms and decay! Oh, God of our immortal souls! It cannot be that we shall become nothing, like earthen worms after we have cared and saved and wept so desperately!

My Lord! Keep my angel in your heaven's vault and take her away from this cold earthen ground! Let me know that she is with You, oh my Allah and I shall suffer in peace.

Oh, men of nations who fight and kill and justify it! Take some pity on the daughters of your future! Have some pity on your widows when you hurt

other women! Let mercy rule you and let not passion and hate turn you into bestial animals!"

"Oh, my own wailing heart! Control the pain that threatens you with a madness that shall consume whatever strength you have left!" The young woman admonished herself. "Oh, my own heart! Find some strength and control before the pain makes you mad with the rage of agony and the torment of mourning."

Oh, now she could only dream that the sister she had lost was in a better land, and roamed in a place of unutterable bliss!

But oh! The despair she felt suddenly choked her as she thought about the immeasurable distance that lay between them. When she tried to get up, her legs were unsteady, and she could do nothing as a loose rock fell on her, hitting her viciously into her ribs. Another stumble knocked the wind out of her. Sobbing, she cried out, "There's no hope for me in this lonely cruel world! This world is for the strong hearted ones! For those who can shoulder pain and not break down. For the ones who souls are fired by passion lust and hate! For the ones who love life and living more than death and Thee!

My heart shall mourn you, oh my angelic soul sister! You have hurt me! You have torn open the wounds of my soul! You have betrayed my heart and you have tormented my soul and tortured me into the edge of insanity with your departure!"

She waited, hoping her sister was somewhere in the heavens, hearing her pleas. Then she once more wept. "Oh, darling, you had no right to die! You had no right to leave me and the nation which you defended and loved! Who gave you the right to leave me and abandon me to the cold unfeeling world?! How am I to survive, oh my guardian angel?! How am I to defend myself when the enemy soldiers invade and torture all women mercilessly! How can I take such brutal pain and witness so horrific an event without begging God for death and madness?!

Oh, world, which is nothing but hell! I seek refuge to the God of heaven from you and your tormenters and from this life which makes men into heartless killers! Why hadn't you thought of me and the future of your nation when you so willingly put your life at perils way to save an enemy?!

Was I not worth anything to you, oh my sister! Was not my heart and my life worth a dinar to you! Then why have you gone from me! And died so happily leaving behind me and the scores of women now at the mercy of invading forces?!" She knew her older sister often spoke her mind freely, leading her to be misunderstood by others on occasions, but how could she ever forget the anxiety she always expressed for her well-being, and her sacrificial nature where she disregarded her own happiness to help another

person in need, as she had done when charging into a blazing inferno and rescuing five men from the depths of the fatal flame?

"Oh, my angelic sister," she whispered again, "I cannot go inside that home that hold your memories lest I should perish in that pain of bitter longing and despair!

I could never look or live in a house where your room and bed shall be empty! How could I ever eat breakfast again, oh my angelic sister, when it was you who cooked every meal for me and partook every tea time with me while we dreamed of our nation one day being free under the laws of the most noble God of the universe with honour dignity and morality?

Oh, world! You have indeed hurt us with a cut so deep and a pain so raw and a burning so fierce and so hot that the entire world would weep for my pain had they known a moment of that agony which eats away my living soul!

Oh, heart that has been broken by the most gruesome pain! Hold on to God Almighty with fierceness or else madness and insanity shall make himself a guest to your soul!

Oh, my Lord! Hold on to me lest depression and hopelessness make me loose the control of my mind and thoughts!

Oh, pain of heartbreak! Oh, pain of hopeless longing! Oh, agony of death and loneliness! How many hearts to do torture and kill each hour!?

Oh, Lord of my sobbing soul! Take pity on a heart so hurt and so lonely! Take pity on me and the million souls which weep and cry themselves to the wildness of the dark night, my Lord! Hear my wailing from above the seven heavens and be not deaf to my cries and screaming! For who have I now save Thee my Lord?! Who have I in the face of this world except you and she whom war has taken away from my already broken weak heart?!

Oh, world, how much more suffering have you in store for me?! How many more seas of tears shall I have to shed to free myself from your torment and pain and agony?!

Oh, my guardian angel! Oh, my heart! Oh, my only sister! Indeed, you have hurt me so severely that no human heart has ever felt a pain as unearthly as mine!" She recalled her older sister's relentless activism and unyielding spirit, and wished she was here on earth and was able to carry on her missions and whispered in anguish, "Why did you love me, O my sister?! Why did you help me and protect me and take care of me if you were going to leave me and abandon me in the end! Like our mother who was also the victim of this war?

Why did you teach me everything except how to live without you!?"

Her sister was a beacon of courage and resilience in the face of immense adversity and yet, she could not escape the clutches of death. Death held such notions of finality that it triggered in her bosom every disagreeable or unwelcome sensations.

“My Lord! Forgive me! Forgive me for having a heart so weak and so broken! I haven’t the strength of even a child! Oh, love is a disease that can torment the strongest of humans into madness and a despair that knows no humanity or pity!

My heart is yours alone, my Creator! Do what you will with it for I have lost all power to make it survive or control it! Take my heart before it burns me into the depths of madness and insanity!

Oh, my Lord! What torture it is to be born so weak and with a heart so raw and so tormented! My love is the most painful disease ever given unto men!

Oh Lord, is there any pain as severe as weakness of the heart and hopelessness of the soul!!”

Pity...

“Pity me, oh world! Pity me and spare me from the torment that makes every heart lose its sense and logic and patience and control!” The young woman cried out, oblivious to the people who were ambling about their daily duties. “Oh, world how lonely you are how cruel you are to the weak and merciful! My Lord! I cannot walk in the street where she walked! I cannot stand in the road knowing she shall never come through the road or through our front gate again!”

The younger woman’s sorrow was a scene to touch and move even the coldest hearts. Locals and even strangers viewed it with tearful eyes and prayerful solicitude. Not from duty only, but from affection, did many weep with the sister that wept, and the congregation of the mosque prayed to God to comfort and defend them in this great trouble. The old cleric prayed that God who giveth life, may graciously heal and restore some measure of comfort to the stricken heart of the young woman’s bereaved sister.

“O Lord,” she continued to plead, “how shall a hopeless soul survive when its only guardian and caretaker is gone?!”

Oh, my Lord! Oh, my Owner, my Creator! Thou knowest very well of the pain which makes human hearts insane with fear and horrors of the most terrifying depression! Hear the wailing of my soul which emanates from the madness of my heart into the silence of Your mighty heavens and spare the women of my nation from suffering a pain so severe and a heartbreak so insane! Let my pain spare them all from a pain so severe and so brutal! My Lord how could the orphans live and survive! How could the siblings whose guardians are gone ever find the strength to live or survive!

Oh, my Lord, my pain has no mercy on me so I beg thee of Thy mercy!

This heart knows no pity when it tortured me and makes me weep myself into the inferno of madness and eternal agony!

Oh, Lord of all women whose hearts are weak and who has no strength to live or die and has none to love her on the face of the world! Oh Lord of the broken hearts! Let my pain be the sacrifice that shall spare the women of my nation from a torment that can make every human burn in a deathless death! Let my pain and suffering spare all the women of my nation from the onslaught of the soldiers and invading forces and their brutality.

Let my tears be the last of all the tears shed by the orphans and the women of my nation!

Take pity, my Lord! Look into the fire that burns my heart and into the pain that strangled my soul and feel my pain from within my heart, O Maker of my heart! Oh, my own Maker! Was it not Thou who madest me?! Was it not Thou who knows the pain of even the most unknown souls!? Then take pity on my burning heart oh, Lord of my broken soul! Let me feel Thy love or hear Thy sign or come to a world where Thou shall heal me with Thy love and mercy!

Oh, my Lord, why had Thou createst me so weak and so soft and sent me down to a world so hard hearted and so merciless?! Oh, my Lord oh my Lord of this aching soul! Oh god of my breaking heart! Hold my heart in Your hands and let not one amongst your creation ever suffer through a pain so deadly and a pain so torturous and an agony so endless and merciless!”

Standing solitary by the cemetery, the younger sister sobbed so mournfully that all those who noticed her became emotional. "Oh, cruel world! Oh, hard hearted world!" She was saying. "Why does men fight to survive in a place so painful in a world so heartbreaking! Oh, take me away from here! Take me away from this world before the world consumes my heart and burns away my soul and makes my mind turn to insanity for some sparing reprieve!

Oh, Lord of broken hearts! Oh, Lord of lost insane souls! Oh, Lord of those whom the world has tortured! I ask thee for Thy lasting love which shall never end nor change! I ask thee for Thy heaven which shall be eternal and painless!

Oh, my Lord! This pain cannot continue for days or even hours for its violence is too brutal for my weak soul to handle! Oh, my Lord, let not death be the end of my lost sister! Let not death be the end of her greatness and the sacrifice she did to save her nation from bloodshed and warfare! Let not her death be the end of the love which has tormented me into so deadly a pain and so bitter an agony! Give us recompense to every orphan and every sibling around the world who is now suffering in the brutality of war and all those who shall suffer in the future to come!"

Soon after she uttered these prayers, the old religious priest approached her and tried to comfort her by reminding her that all mortals were meant to die one day.

"I feel if I could but just now interpret in perfect language the reality of life and the liberation in death and deliver it to your being," the Imam said slowly, "perhaps God should lend me a tongue to persuade you, and cause you to find courage in the face of this loss, and submit to Him in this hour of saving mercy. Should you have faith that Allah loves your sister very earnestly, then there would wake within you a chord responsive to this strong word of Providence. Allah only knows your heart, my child, and He knows your mind, and sees the sorrow in your inmost soul on this earth-shattering occasion, and He knows you are grieved by the loss of your older sister. But we know also, that it shall not be long when all woes will be resolved. Should we hereafter, as now, be called to speak some words before the burial of one of you, who had not died in the faith and hope of God's eternal hereafter, we could not find it in such a death, to console our minds with the vain imagination, that though we had lived and died in sin, yet we too would doubtless be received into the expansive heaven."

"Ah, but I know," cried the young woman. "Our Lord cannot end our soul with death nor can my heart and soul and my pain and wailing have the same ending as the earth worms that die and become turned into dirt and dust! O Lord! Let our life live on in eternity up above the heavenly skies and in Thy kingdom of happiness and immortality! Oh, my Lord! Let not my sister- my heart's very soul, get rotted away by the earth of this ground and let not her soul be mortal like her body and make us and all the victims of this world immortal and let us live on forever in Thy kingdom of Heaven near Thy home in let us bask in the glory of Thy love and live on forever till time itself shall end..."

The religious cleric tried to comfort the younger sister and spoke warm praises of the departed woman, insisting that death was not the end. "Ah, dear child, you still must have hope, for death is not the end! Nurture new hopes that are founded on the boundless mercies of our God and Saviour, Who has watched over you and your sister from earliest childhood, and encompassed us all with His goodness and protecting care. Yes, Allah's mercy has followed you even to this place; where, on learning of your older sister's death, your heart had undoubtedly sunk within yourself."

The younger sister nodded wordlessly, but as soon as the religious cleric departed from her presence, she began to weep again.

"Oh, my Lord," lamented she, "my sister was everything I ever had! Do not let her body be gone to the earth! Do not let her soul become like that of animal but take her to Thee and keep her with Thee, O Allah! Lord of my burning fiery soul! Take my sister's body and soul up to towards Thy heaven and keep her with Thee till I come to Thee!"

Oh, my Lord! The world betrayed me! The bombs and soldiers took away all my loved ones one by one! The people broke me and the world tormented me with an agony unexplainable by any human words or language! So, in my madness I turn to Thee alone! For to Thee belongs the kingdoms and dominion of all that we see and can never see and all that we know of, and of that which we shall never know!

So I beg Thee with all the madness of my burning bitterest tears to keep safe my angelic sister with Thee in Thy kingdom in Thy own home and I pray that one day Thou, oh Maker of life, shall reunite every orphan with their parents and every sibling with their friend and every widow with her husband!"

The younger sister's piety and emotions shocked and silenced the congregation, for they had never seen a sibling weeping more bitterly for a deceased one, and the elderly cleric expressed awe near the sphere of younger woman, and knew that blessed indeed was she who was thus adorned with the manifold graces of a kind and gentle emotional nature. How much love did she contain in her heart to grieve a stern older sister so! How amiable, how irresistible, how attractive was she, in her youthful

purity, and yet she sought no glory or gifts, and shone where she did not seek to shine, and was eloquent even when silent, and was able to gain all goodness by submission to God, by patience, by self-denial.

“Oh, Lord of all broken hearts! Oh, Lord of tortured souls! Who shall we call unto if not Thee! Who shall we turn to when all the world has turned against us! Who shall we hold onto if our reason for existence is gone from us!

Calm my heart oh, my Lord of every beating heart! Be my guardian be my parent’s guardian, be my only friend oh my Maker, for today I have none but Thee!

The hearts shall become mad if Thou comest not down to comfort me! Oh, my merciful Creator of this lost forgotten soul! Spare me, my Lord, and spare the younger sisters of the word from the pain and the torment which can turn all minds into the darkness of madness and a depression too painful to fathom!”

For long hours, the young woman cried, until she fainted and fell upon the uneven rocky floor. Locals tried to assist her to her feet, but she refused to leave the site of her sister’s burial, and upon getting to her feet, resumed the prayers for her dear sister’s departed soul.

“Oh Lord!” She cried. “I pity the mad for I know now how they have all become mad! Broken lonely and betrayed hearts makes all merciful men turn to lunacy for reprieve! Oh, my Lord! Oh, my Maker! Pour mercy in the heart of every man whose hearts have been broken and betrayed so violently that they have gone mad! Leave me not behind in this kingdom of demons in the world where men are cruel and the demons rule!

Take me to Thee, for soon-the fire of my heart shall consume my soul away!

Oh, my Lord! I have no one! I have no one, oh, my Lord! The world is cruel! The world is lonely, oh, Lord of my soul! Why have you abandoned me and forgot me and left me to myself to weep by myself and cry myself to sleep?! I am noting without You, without Your hope my Lord I wouldn’t and I couldn’t exist or subsist! You alone keep man human!

Your hope alone differentiates men from beasts and hopeful from the hopeless!

This world and this life are not for those whose hearts are so broken so soft and so fragile!

This world is only it for the most passionate cruel hearts and the most selfish souls! My Lord, take me from here if Thou should love me! My Lord, let me come to Thee! Let me come to Thee and feel Thy love and comfort my heart with Thy companionship for the world is cruel, my Lord! This

world is merciless where men are cruel and only serve their masters for wealth power or lust!

Take me to Thy kingdom and tell me, my Lord, that Thou has not hated me and nor has Thou forgotten me or think of me to be unworthy of Thy heaven and Thy kingdom."

Hopelessness

She flung herself over the patch of dust where her older sister was buried, and wept bitter tears. Few mourners were nearby, and even fewer knew her sister well enough, but she understood her like no other, and though her words, while keen and biting at times, was used to convey clear and positive notes, she was never ill-natured.

How could her brave and strong sister die?

She wept so bitterly that she feared God would hold her accountable for complaining so excessively, and she raised her hands to heaven and cried, "Forgive a heart so broken and so lonely and so weak and fragile! Forgive a heart that knows not how to survive on its own!

Forgive me, oh God! My heart is thine alone! My soul is Thine own making! Thou give life to whom Thou will and takes it from whom Thou will!

Let me drown in the sea of Thy mercy and let my heart find contentment in Thy kingdom or eternal after life!

Oh Lord! How can I survive life in this tormentor's world now that my only hope is gone?!"

Some strangers were wary of interacting with the martyred young woman due to her sharp and no-nonsense attitude, but had they known her demeanour was only severe when directed against ignorance and pompous pretension, perhaps strangers would find more sympathy in their hearts for her. Since childhood, her older sister was elated with stories of global adventures, and enjoyed retelling the most thrilling anecdotes of the war which moved men whose souls had been hardened by hate, and her passionate speeches could stir up the heart-blood like the sound of a funeral trumpet.

"My Lord!" Cried she, alone in her mourning. "I am afraid of depression and a loneliness which makes even the strongest and bravest of men mad

till they start blaming and hating You and become enslaved to men and their enemies!

Oh, my Lord, my hopeless heart yearns for Thy love! I long for Thy companionship and Thy eternal heaven where all pain shall be recompensed and every broken heart shall heal and the laughter of the Martyrs shall give joy to my soul!

Spare me from the torments of this world and its men! My Lord I am terrified of heartless and passionate men of this world whom

Anger and hate made them most cruel and feeling less to all but themselves! So, in Thy mercy give me refuge and protection to my broken heart and my soul of a million open wounds! Save my heart oh god of my tortured heart!"

Heaving a great sigh, the young woman turned her beautiful face to the skies, and added, "Save me and every woman and child from the cruel men of this world for I am more terrified of their hatred than I am of the beasts and animals of Your jungle! Save every victim of war from the anger of enemy soldiers and the killers and the planners of wars that ravage and burn the loved ones of mothers and children away forever!"

Although all those who saw the younger woman was stunned by the attractive power of her female loveliness, especially when heightened by the charm of a winning manners and courtesy, her grief was now so several that not a word save sobs would emanate her mouth, and she spoke only of the older sister who was no more.

"Be my guardian, oh my Lord, for Thou art my God!" She continued. "Thou art only my God! Only Mine and none else's but mine! I call upon Thee, oh Lord of all aching hearts and wailing souls to spare us and save us from the tortured world and give us the kingdom of Your heaven to live in for eternity!

This heart is stabbed tortured and broken and betrayed! I have none! I have no soul that feels even pity for me save the Lord who made my soul so weak and my heart so easily injured! Look into my soul and come into the folds of my heart oh, my Maker and Creator and Sustainer and feel my pain and the madness that Torments my existence! There is no hope but Thee there's no pity no reprieve no mercy but Thine! Let thy love awash my soul with mercy and happiness!

Oh, my Lord! O my Maker! Thou hast made me with a healthy heart and a perfect body and a love filled soul, but today I give Thee back my broken soul and my knifed out heart and my tortured body and my insane mind! I hand Thee back all that thou hast given me! For I have no want for anything from Thee except death and a love from Thee which shall not been taken away from me! A love from Thee that shall not betray me or cut open my heart with wounds so deep and so deadly! I have nothing to ask

for any longer! I have no need for anything of this worldly life! For my agony and my pain has destroyed and burned all that Thou hast given me! I want nothing from Thee save Thy love! A love from thee that shall heal the wounds of my heart and glue back the piece of my shattered heart and find my soul which has run away from me to hide away from a pain so fierce and so insane that I cannot find my soul any longer!

Make me Thine! Bring me back to Thee, my Lord! The world has no use for weak hearts like mine so call me back to Thee and let me live with Thee!

Give Thy love to a broken heart like mine and heal the pain that shatters my heart with every shard of ice and dagger!

This world was not made for soft hearts like mine who cannot survive when death and loneliness and fear and pain attack us from every corner!"

The younger sister, even in her grief and tears, glowed with an otherworldly beauty, and her death was something even the locals in the town mourned, for they thought she was a woman so fair, and so fragile, that she seemed fitted for other spheres than this rough world, but was taken hence, and transported to the heavens by legions of angels, who doubtlessly beckoned her upwards to the vaulted sky, into a realm of rest and rejuvenation.

"Oh God of my burnt-out heart!" She continued to supplicate. "Take pity on a soul so terrified and a heart so fearful!

Let me become Thine own neighbour because who but the Maker of those mighty burning stars of this endless universe has the power to heal my hopeless heart?

Save me from the cruel world, oh my Lord, save me from this world and its suffering! Save me from witnessing the crying of orphans and the sobbing of mothers whose sons have died killing their neighbours! Save me from the sound of the wailing widows whose weeping keeps all awake through the long and fearful nights! Save me for who else can save me from a world so cruel and so pitiless!"

The younger sister regarded it as the most sensible act of her life to have had the opportunity of thus publicly expressing veneration for her sister's memory. But like an unfinished autobiography, she was not consoled by the commemoration alone. She spent her waking hours searching into the treasures of her memory, and recollected anecdotes from her dear sister's life, but grief often overwhelmed her before she could celebrate the dear sister's life.

For nearly an entire day, she remained secluded in one corner of her home, hoping that her sister would suddenly reappear from the doorway. Soon, she felt as though she was locked in a windowless prison, where she had lost a part of herself, and as she looked up at the night time sky, she found it hard to believe the world was still here, and the sky was real, or that she still existed.

Her sister's favourite stars were still glittering over the city, but now they shone with a solemn and sad light, as though mourning the brave young woman who sacrificed her life to save the lives of fellow countrymen as well as the foe. In a new wave of grief, she cried out, "Oh, world why do you torture me with the death of my loved ones and demand that I walk upon your ground and live and survive as if you haven't crushed and broken the precious bodies of my loved ones!

Oh, world do you want to make me as incentive as you and as cruel as those who fight to live while their loved ones die away forgotten and lost forever!

Oh, world you can take my body but my heart you can never defile for it belongs to my Lord who put His soul in me and made it beat on His will!

Oh, world you have taken away my laughter, my reason to live, my soul and my heart away all in one moment!

All my hope is gone like the wind of a hurricane it has carried every last hope of my hopeless soul! The trees are dancing for they have become as cruel as the world that torments me, they care not for the pain that drives my heart into madness! Oh, hopelessness, you have indeed finally won over my soul! My Lord of hope, I no longer pray to Thee for hope; I only beg

Thee to free my soul from the false hopes that only finds pleasure in the brutal torment of my soul!

My religion has been defiled to the world; our blood has fallen worthless to the ground, they have taken over our country and have sworn to eradicate all signs and symbols of the faith that freed us and dignified us and honoured us for over a thousand years, they have taken away my heart, my soul and my only beloved sister as if they killed me once every second and a thousand times every hour!

Oh, sadness! Oh, hopelessness! How pitiless you are! How cruel you are to women whose hearts are weak and helpless! You have taken everything from me, I have no reason to live! My Lord, hasten my meeting with Thee and save me from the false happiness of life which only prolongs this agony and torments every sane person into the brinks of insanity..." Her eyes blurred with emotion as she rose from her ground.

Oh, why had the vital sparks of life leave her mortal frame?

Trembling, praying and hoping she would survive her name!

Oh, the pain of dying and grief of expiring riddles me with guilt.

The night is dark and I weep endlessly for her who is deep under the ground man walks upon! Oh, my own soul! I shall come to Thee soon; our Lord shall not torment me with a life I no longer want!

"Oh, Lord of my tormented soul!" The woman cried. "If there's any wish of me Thou shouldst grant, then save all the women of my nation from every sin and lustful acts so they do not suffer degradation and humiliation afterwards and save the honour of Thy faith for which a million souls died to bring Thy honourable laws back to our nation! Take not Thyself away from us oh, Lord of my heartbroken soul! Thy enemies have taken everything from us! Now if Thou should join them and take thy faith and Thy religion away from us, then what else shall we have left? then indeed we shall suffer not only in this life but in the afterlife too!

Our Lord, let these tears that burn my heart and the blood of my sister which bathed this earth be enough for forgiveness of my sinful nation and let our prayers gain Thy mercy to overcome Thy wrath and grant us O Lord, Thy faith and Thy laws and take not Thyself away from us for truly we shall lose everything and the enemies who tormented us shall win for eternity!"

"Oh, do not bury her under that gravestone and don't pour soil and mud over the face for which I would have died a million times to save!" She cried as the grave diggers began to prepare the corpses for burial.

Interrupting her protests, the religious cleric consoled the young woman and said, "We did not come to this world to live forever, my child. We came to help others and live like a traveller for numbered days. Our mission on earth was not to live here eternally, but to prepare for the everlasting hereafter. If Imam Hussein being so sinless could suffer so bitterly, and still remained patient, it is our duty to hold steadfast to the rope of patience. Do not despair, and do not lose your heart over the loss of a mortal. No matter what happened, your sister had to die one day. No one can live forever. Pagans hired these very neighbours to kill Imam Hussein, and today, these very same disbelievers use our neighbours against us, so do not hate anyone. You will never really know who your enemy is. Forgive and try to move on with your life."

"I hate those who caused my sister to be killed." She said delicately.

The imam nodded sympathetically, adding, "O do not hate or love anyone too intensely, for the countrymen for whose love you wish to kill the enemy will one day become your greatest foe. In fact, we are aware of how the honour of millions of our women have been violated by the enemy and they were forced to give birth to the child of their exploiter, and when these infants become old, after twenty and thirty years, maybe they will personally slay all religious men in this nation. Who shall be your enemy then?"

Upon night fall, when all the mourners had left, the younger sister stood by the mound of cold earth and wept audibly. "The night has made my heart mad! Darling sister come to me! Come back to me and tell me is your first night in the grave as painful as the terrors that are tormenting my mind into madness! Oh, angel of my soul! I should have died a million times a million ways to make you live a little longer or at least until my death came, then you could have left me without causing such agony to befall me.

Darling of my heart! I was never strong, weak was my heart and if it weren't for the God of Hussien then surely, I would have become mad in my pain and torment!

You were stronger and braver! Why didn't the world spare me this pain and let me leave this world first so I wouldn't have to suffer the night to be cursed to live above the earth while my own soul sister lays under the cold dark underground grave?!

Oh, God of my burning eyes who tears shall outflow the Persian Gulf Sea! Give me and the people of my nation a place in Thy own heaven and let not Thy enemies win over our nation and take away Thy religion from our

midst! Oh, God let not those of the world powers who sent these bombs and fighter jets and spies to frame and defame us and our religion and murder us win over the hearts of our nation and make us turn against our God and our religious scholars and make us their slaves and servant of lust and degradation after they had helped kill a million of our young men and boys and girls!"

A ball of agony exploded in her head, and she cried out in sadness and moaned in pain. Her vision blurred, as she fell, weak-kneed into the concrete. Tears flowed like a burst dam from her large expressive eyes, and as she eased into a sitting position, and darts of pain shot up from her belly and back.

Long tresses of light hair framed her heart-shaped face, and as her tearful gaze fixed on the ground. She could not believe her sister was dead! "So long as my heart shall beat and the drums of life shall beat, and with every breath I take and every word I say I shall mourn you and I shall call unto the throne of my Lord till He has no choice but to listen to my call." The younger sister lamented. "Oh, pain that tortures the helpless! Oh, suffering that spares not even the sinless ones! Oh, hopelessness that burns away the last hope of every dying soul! Oh, endless merciless depression that has no pity on the hearts of those who weep and wail! How long shall you torment me and my people! How long shall I have to suffer in your hands Oh, world till my Lord finally calls me back to His kingdom in that eternity of joy and life where loved ones shall not die and rot away and man shall not be forced to live while their families lay buried underneath the dark hard ground! Oh, Allah my heart weeps for You and You have no right to turn away from a soul who has no one save Thee! Lord of sadness Lord of happiness! Lord of love and Lord of my own injured soul! Who have I to complain to when all else is gone from me and only Thou remains! Spare the hearts that weep of Thy silence, and answer her who calls unto Thee with a pain that could destroy the world a hundred times over! Oh, God of prophets and the giver of scriptures and laws that gave us honour and freedom! Take not Your faith away from us and let not our enemies degrade our women with faithlessness and godlessness and nudity and fornication and sins and consensual abuse! Let not the enemies who killed us frame and defame Thy religion to our youth and our future generation! Forget not our tears or the blood we shed for Thy own sake O Lord of our helpless souls!

Food is scarce and the heart cannot stop and the eyes -they have become helpless against the assault of endless tears that pour down without mercy or pity!

Oh, Lord of Ali! Who else but You can know of what pain Thy own slave maid suffers from! Was it not You who made me with such weakness of the heart that only knows how to weep and cannot eat live or survive for her heart is too weak to survive in the world which belongs to cruel and evil men and demons.

Oh, pitiless pain that has no mercy nor reprieve! I beg thee to spare my heart for how much pain can a human heart bear till it breaks down into a million pieces of shards and embers!

Oh, sister! I have no strength to live nor any will to fight for life or food! I cannot find it in my weakness to go venture out in the cold cruel world and fight against enemy soldiers with this broken heart and find food to eat or rent to pay for our home! Poverty sickness starvation is all the hope that's left for my weak helpless soul!"

Hearing the cries of her bewailing, the old religious man decided to comfort the younger sister, and asked her to hold fast to patience.

He said, "Death is a harsh and fearful reality faced by everyone who lives. No one has the power to avoid it, nor does anyone around the dying person have the ability to prevent it. Many humans live the life of this world, seeking the best that it has to offer, while ignoring what lies ahead of them upon death. This is a result of weak faith, for such people live only for what is before their eyes. The adornment of this world is but temptations to distract us from the true purpose of life and the reminder that we will indeed be responsible for all we do in this life."

"But I cannot accept that my sister would die so young!" she cried out.

"My child, believing in death is part of belief in the unseen and is an essential part of faith. God mentions in the Holy Scripture, 'This is the Book without doubt, in it is guidance sure, for those who fear Allah, those who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what we have provided.' (The Final Testament, 2:1-3) Death is something, which happens every moment and is encountered by the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak. They are all the same because there is no plan or means of escaping it, no power, no means of intercession, no way to prevent it, nor to delay it, which shows that indeed it comes from One having tremendous power - so that the human is helpless in this regard and can only submit to it."

Finding some solace in his words, the young woman began to address her deceased sister: "Oh, strength of my heart! What did you expect when you left me to die! That I could survive this heart break and still find the will or wish to survive and live and eat and earn?"

I cannot move, O sister I cannot move nor walk above the ground that buried your heart under the earth of mud and soil that men walk upon!

How can I live in a home when your home is of a dark wooden coffin?

Oh, my guardian angel! How can I wear gowns and dresses when your gown is a shroud? How can I eat by myself alone in the world while my heart's only beloved eats nothing for us dead and gone and speaks no more with me nor listens to the wailing and crying of my broken heart!"

As she sobbed, the woman became more and more agitated. How faint the traces of what in reality were the most important events of her existence! She wanted to make attempts in recalling all the events from her early days and celebrate the happy moments from the earlier periods of their life.

She addressed the world thus, "Pitiless you are, Oh, world! Worthless is your wealth! Useless is your food and garments when you kill and bury all those who enjoyed your wealth and food! Cruel are you Oh, world which tricks men into lust and sin then kills them destroys them and turn their neighbours against them and finally defame their religion so they suffer degradation not only in this world but also in the afterlife.

How worthless you are oh, world, yet men fight to live above your ground! How useless is your wealth of a few days and how disloyal are the lovers of men who cheat on them the day they die, yet how you fool men into killing and dying and fighting and murdering for a meagre amount of wealth and a handful of food which shall become the food of the worms of their grave!

How useless are your mansions when one by one you kill all these who live in mansions faster than those who live in huts and shanties and bury them side by side while enemies take over their homes and wealth!

I have seen what you are O, world! I want neither your freedom of a few days where you use this fancy word to turn men and women into lawless animals who lust after anyone and everyone and justifies all sickness and debauchery in the name of love and equality and turn men into free lawless immoral animals!"



"Oh, my Lord, weakness of the heart and weakness of the will was my only sin!" The beautiful young woman cried out, "I pray to thee for some strength, enough to not blame You for the punishment -the sins our nation earned by dishonouring the God who had given us all!"

The night was dark and windy, and the only light was the flickering rays of the moon, which peered from within the white cloud. She could see clearly the dusty road lying stretching before her, but there was of life anywhere. The wind renewed its roars, and whipped her fair hair around her face. Oh, she was afraid, and terribly sad. She addressed God thus, "This pain that I feel this loss which took every wish or hope away from me, this agony that burnt my soul into oblivion has made me too helpless and too afraid to live! My Lord is there anyone in the world who is more afraid of living than me! Can life be more painful than the agony that makes death appear as a saviour?"

My Lord, this heart is too weak and I have no more strength left to live and no more wish to survive!

Oh, Lord of my weak heart! Oh, Lord of my broken soul! Oh, Lord of Virgin Mary who had none on earth and was a refugee and an outcast and Thou were her only Gaurdian! Oh, God of Moses who helped the helpless Israelis cross the ocean to save themselves for the torture of Pharaoh, when they had lost every last hope!

Oh, Lord, God of the helpless! God of the women whose hearts are too broken for men to ever understand! I beg Thee for an early reprieve for O my Maker! I have no strength to live and to survive only to witness my nation losing and the disbelievers taking over our youths and turning their hearts against the God who made and loved them!

Oh, God of every soul that passed away and now lives in Your Kingdom! Take me away from the world before my nation loses its faith and God from my race is gone!

How much more pain can my small heart take?

I cannot take it anymore, my Lord! Patience has tortured me and I cannot hold on to it any longer! Oh, Lord of broken hearts cut with glasses of hottest pain and suffering! How can I watch enemy soldiers take over our nation and trample our lands and take the Faith of Husein and Ali away from us!

How can I sit back and watch with a heart so tormented and a mind so raw with fear and terror while enemy soldiers dishonour our women and

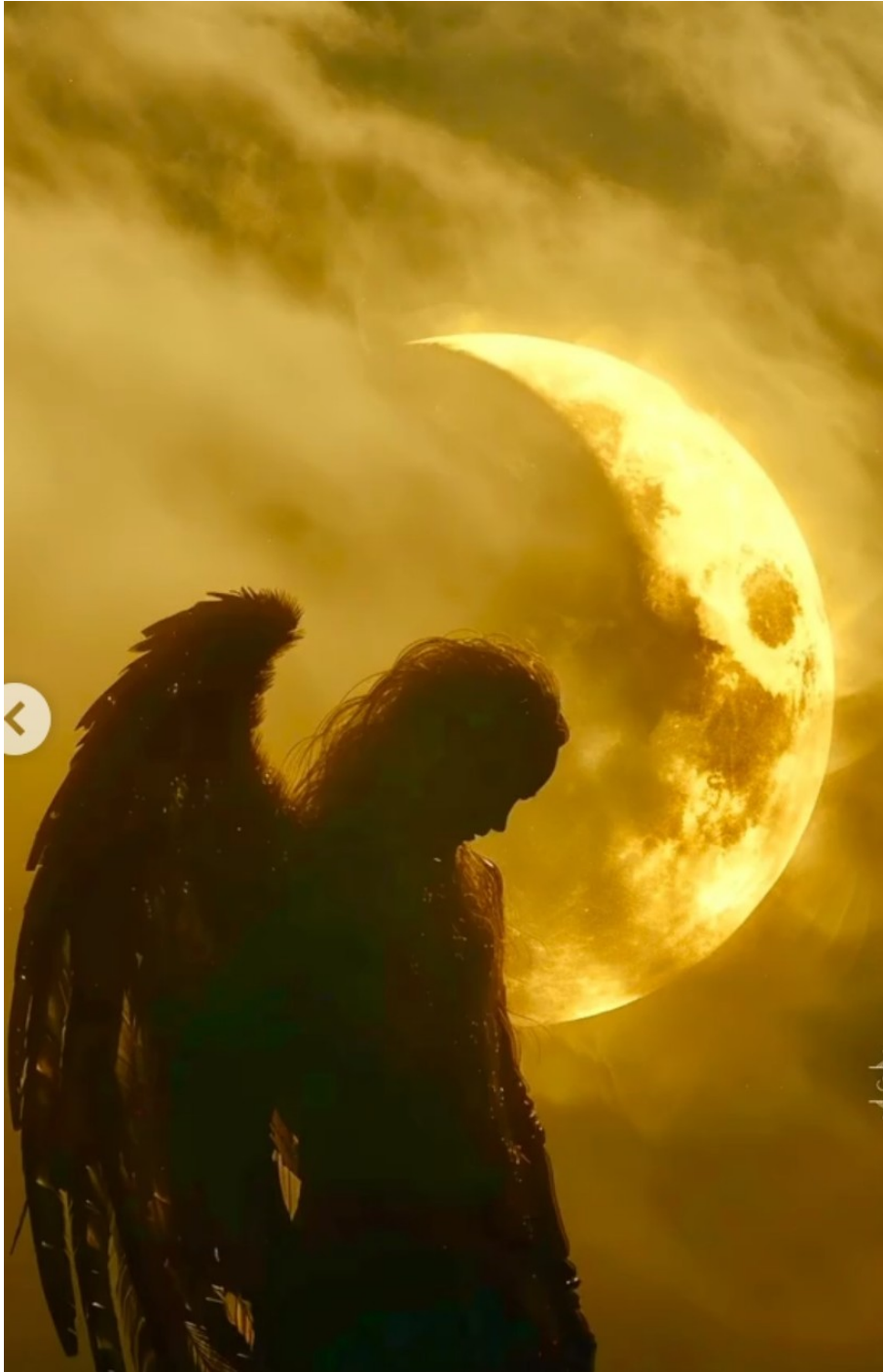
destroy our bloodline with their sinful children and make our next generations into criminals and assaulters like their fathers?"

**In vain had death clipped her eagle-wings,
In vain, we buried her with common things,
When she drove faith and freedom's wheel,
Bearing a courageous heart of steel,
With beaming bashfulness, whose grace
Gave beauty to her sombre face.**

**In beauty, and in majesty, and power,
How bravely she spent her final hour,
Where an anxious city sought and found,
A sister to all, and a saviour abound!
How her voice silenced every note of woe,
And my life was brightened with her glow,
As she lived under the pure sky,
Never did I think she could die!**

**Fondly I hold all her memories true,
Though they were as fleeting and as few!
Ah, I have but one more regret,
Of not bidding her to linger yet,
And nor from our fairy life depart,
And tear the twilight of my heart!
Each hour in her day was blessed with joy and pride,
She was my sister, my guardian, and my guide!
In vain for hours, I have knelt and prayed,
Hoping she would exit from that yonder glade,
Painfully against my own human will,
Where each cell stands with dignity to fill,
And all things thereto appertaining,
To fires and furies and lamenting,**

**O, what I would now give,
To see her once more live,
Or bring her back for one enchanted hour,
Restoring to life, that priceless flower!**



“Our Lord! Lord of women! Lord of honour! Lord of hope when all the world becomes hopeless! Take pity on a soul who none takes pity upon!

Pour Thy mercy upon a heart so raw and so tortured and so helpless!

Thou have taken all from me so I now come back to Thee with this heart that is now bleeding and breaking and this soul which has lost every last ray of hope! I come to Thee my Lord of all heavens and earths! Because there is no one else who’d hear my plea! Because there is none else who’d hear my pain or soothe my ailing soul!

War has taken away my mother and then father and then my siblings and all those whom I love and every single uncle and aunts! Until it was just me and my sister, just me and her against the whole world, none to feed me but her none to clothe me or earn our rent or pay for the heat and gas! And now Thou too have taken her from me! She has gone to Thee willingly for she was a brave heart, a warrior braver than most men of today and a defender of God and country and she loved her country more than me!

Tell me, O God, whom I loved through every pain and suffering! Tell me she is well with You, loved by You and as she had died saving her mortal enemy! Loved by You, taken by You and soothe my heart with the promise Thou shall never break!

Reunite us, Oh, my Beloved Allah! Return me to her and my family in Your heaven and give this heart some reprieve! Oh, I seek not from Thee any wealth or any fame or honour or justice! All I seek from Thee is a chance to come to Thee while Thou art pleased with my soul!

The world has become blind to fire that they pour upon our nation and the blood of our million boys and girls while all the powers of the world funds our enemies to defame us frame us and invade us and destroy our bloodline from the face of this earth! The world has turned against us! The world has become obsessed with turning You Oh, God against us too for they do not want us to come to Thy heaven! The world became merciless to us when they hate us and only promise to love us if we dishonour You O God and if we abandon Your laws and become the slave of dishonour and lust and debauchery!

How much more pain can a human take before they lose all sanity!”

As the thunder echoed over the hills, she drew back with a sigh of sadness and found no beauty in the glorious brightness of the lightening that flashed menacingly above her head.

With each flash, the countryside was illuminated, and the beautiful range, with its deep green and purple colours glittered in the shadows of the peaks and jade green grasses mingled among the rich rocks, while an endless perspective of jagged slopes and pointed crags overtook the scene. In to the thunder, she sobbed, "Oh, wind that blows take me away from men and sin and take me away from war and destruction and take me far away to the home of My Lord!

Oh, pain of hunger! Oh, pain of loneliness! Oh, pain of betrayal and fear of my God's wrath! I have not the strength to bear any more of the suffering our nation is to face, how can I watch my nation lose and how can I stand to hear the celebrations of our enemies when they celebrate the misguidance of our entire nation! My Lord! Owner of a heart that has gone to the edge of annihilation and torment! Take my soul away before I have to witness my nation and its younger generations take the side of our enemies who killed and funded our death and destruction! Take me away Oh, God of the martyrs, take me away before the day I am cursed to witness my nation leaving God and entering into eternal destruction and love the enemies who had hurt them and shall hurt them again! Take me away before the day enemy and foreign soldiers should step upon our homeland! How this tortured heart bear that pain and not become insane?

Oh, war accursed be you and the ones who fund you and propagate you!

Oh, war that kills all young men!

Oh, war that legalizes the killing of humans!

Oh, war! May the curse of Allah descend upon those who fund wars and kills innocent souls!

Cursed be you, O war and battles which dishonours every woman and orphans every child and destroys the bloodline of every wise nation with passionate sinful children!

Oh, war that takes away the siblings of every hopeless and helpless girl! Oh, war that snatches away the soul of every loving mother! Oh, war that makes every woman beg for food and sin for a morsel for her starving child!

Oh, war which finds pleasure in the wailing of every orphan child!

Oh, God of my tortured soul! Oh, God of Abraham who taught us of Thee and o God of Moses who brought forth laws of righteousness to a pagan world! Oh, God of Jesus and Oh, God of Muhammad who freed the women

and orphans of a Zoroastrian Persia from the abuse of incestuous marriages and blood sacrificing pagans!

How can you turn deaf to our cries, Oh, my Allah! My heart shall rise above the world and no demons can come between the wailing of my heart and my Lord! He shall hear my cries and He shall reunite all the loved ones to live in joy for eternity!"

**These oracles as the only source,
Guiding mankind to their course,
And in the deeds of all who live,
The sons of men who can forgive,
Of right and justice among them,
Who goodness cannot condemn;
Marvel not their worth be denied,
Nor are they purged from pride,
Every line of the Scripture and Book,
Brought from the sky- to learn and look,
Understanding literal interpretations,
Practicing faith with human compassions!
Theirs's the vision and the mystery!
Theirs's the life of rationality.
O thou who enjoyest this happiness supreme,
Rejoice! for thou hast seized the living dream,
Where eternity's warden invites thyself,
Which is the Almighty God Himself!
Beware of the scorching heat of sin,
Permit not to escape thy grasp within!
Shouldest thou therein read, or find hope,
Safety from cinders shall be within thy scope,
And the refreshing verses of the Book divine
Will cool the ardours of the infernal mine!
Strong as the steed of the suns of tomorrow,**

**Straighter than the bridge of passing sorrow,
Just as the balance wherein are weighed,
Deeds of all who lived and all who are afraid!
Of morals, and sympathy, and charity,
Backwards they went in our history;
And all the practical motions show
The truth in matters high and low;
And constant changes in morality,
Cursed human actions for eternity.**

“Thou, O Allah, are my last hope! The last ray of sunshine and the last drop of water and the last morsel of food! Take me into Thy heaven and tell me that Thou has my loved ones with Thee and let us live with Thy love and forget the pain and suffering inflicted upon us by men of the devil’s own lair.”

The younger sister’s wailing could be heard from near and afar, and as the elderly Imam was passing by the hills, he noticed her cries, and halted beside the bereaved woman and consoled her with words from the Koran, and assured her that her sister was surely in the highest stations in Heaven.

**“But I am sad, pious Imam, I am beset with grief for this loss!” Cried she.
“I cannot tolerate this pain!”**

The religious cleric knelt beside her and spoke with compassion. “Indeed, the heart mourns in languages and ways no human could ever begin to fathom.” He began. “But while your sorrow is severe, think for one moment of our nation’s history, and where our faith had come from. Are you not aware of the events which took place in the cities of our own neighbouring nation, where pagan enemies betrayed the beloved Messenger of God and slaughtered every last member of his family?”

The young woman nodded wordlessly.

“Our neighbouring nation is now being used to attack us, although it is not their fault, for in the past, they were likewise used to torture and humiliate the honourable noble women of the family of the Prophet. They used such inhuman and cowardly tactics to torture chaste women in the Battle of Karbala and its aftermath because they did not want the religion of God to liberate womenkind and offer liberty to all. The events of the past are a reminder that pagan falsehood, no matter how powerful it was, would always feel threatened by truth that it would stoop to the lowest level to claim its share, but truth, no matter how much pain and suffering it goes

through would always be victorious. The people of our prophet's family suffered unspeakably, perhaps even greater than yourself, and when the pagan plotters hired locals in our neighbouring nations to unleash a saga of tyranny, every member of the noble household were subjected to the most inhuman torture and raw ropes were used to tie the necks of all women and children which meant that the mothers had to march bending their bodies so that children did not get choked with the pressure on their necks. This burning pain which they experienced and their fear was unmatched. The loneliness of that humiliation could obliterate even the strongest of warriors. Take heed, my child, and learn this lesson well. Our predecessors too have sacrificed and they too suffered their share of sorrow."

"My Lord," she cried, once the Imam took his leave, "take some pity on my soul! Who have I but you know that my only friend is gone?! Who has my abandoned soul -but you? Death has taken away all who loved me. And now I have no more strength to live or survive! She is gone from me who would have given me the world! O she is gone, she is gone indeed and shall never return!"

Rolling on the dusty ground, the younger sister wailed. "She is taken from me who would have died a million times trying to save me from every harm! She is gone, gone forever my Lord! But how can I complain! Because you are my God and I must endure with patience but Oh, God of my tortured and hurt soul! I know not how!"

Wiping away her tears, she pleaded, "Oh, teach me patience! O heavens! Teach me some patience! Why is my weak heart crying so insanely?! I have no power to stop my tears, my Lord! This heart is too weak for surviving this cruel heartless world!"

The funeral itself was a sombre affair.

“O Imam, I cannot bury her!” Cried the younger sister, wringing her hands in hysteria. “She is myself! I cannot bury her; I cannot make myself throw mud and Earth over her face which means more to me than my own body- a million times more anywhere any place any time.”

“Know this, my child, that this grave is not your sister’s abode, but she has gone on to heaven, where God and His angels are attending to her every need!”

The younger sister was unable to hear the religious cleric’s words due to her audible sobs, and continued to plead. “O honourable Imam! if you must bury her body, then take pity on me and bury me too with her! Bury me with her so I do not have to suffer a pain so brutal and inhumane! Oh, imam, don't take her away from me! Don't her body away from my heart. Don't throw her body away or bury her under the mud like some plant or seeds. She is my blood my own soul my heart and everything I am is from her! Indeed, I must take revenge on her behalf, otherwise I shall not be able to live!”

My child! Bloodshed only begets more blood and no pain of the enemy should give us joy, for today our neighbours maybe our enemy -tomorrow our real enemies may turn us and our own people against each other, what is enemy then? What is winning and losing when your own brethren’s die? What is there to avenge and what is there to defend and who is there to love and who is there to hate if our neighbours become our enemies and later our enemies turn our own youngsters against us?”

“But they killed my only sister,” she cried.

“Yes, but killing the enemy would not bring her back to us,” the religious cleric explained gently. “Every soldier killed is a mother killed. Every man killed is a child and an orphan killed too. Every woman assaulted is an entire nation and an entire race whose bloodline and wisdom and self-control, and characters destroyed forever by the blood of their enemies, and by the blood and child of sin and passion.

The young woman tried to dry her tears upon hearing the old man’s words, and instead addressed the planet which claimed her sister. “Oh, world without her there is no me, there is no me, and there was never a me without her from birth till today she did everything for me and she became part of my own self.

War has taken away one by one and I have mourned them all bitterly and never allowed myself to think that one day I must part with her too! Oh, heartbreak Oh, burning agony! O cruelty of life! I long for heaven! Oh, my Allah what would I do if I didn't have You? What would I do if You weren't there to take my sister and keep her near You?"

The young woman was beside herself with sorrow, and lamented, "O worldly life! How can you torture me with such cruelty and madness when I have no one in this life but her?!" With outstretched hand, she pleaded to the funeral procession to delay awhile. "Oh, do not bury her under the cruel cold ground! Forgive me my Lord, forgive the wailing of my burning heart and forgive these rivers of tears which is painful enough to outvie death a million times!"

How she mourned that her sister's life was on such guidance and example bent, that she could not imagine a world without her.

Tear overflowed her eyes, which was now dimmed with bursting with grief. For her, it was as though the tree of life had fallen over the land!

Clings tenderly to a heavy sense of loss,
All earthly nuisance which I come across,
Broods over my forgotten joys and prayer,
As I struggle to breathe that world's air,
Which now covers and bestrews the grave,
Where all the mortals whom God forgave,
Meet and mourn the privileged and power,
That gathers strength with every rolling hour,
And the pang of pain that floods my eyes,
Cannot be banished when a dear sister dies.
I have only one word more to say,
That death came too early in the day,
To seize thee from all mortal motions,
And leave me without sisterly affections!

**With unseen companions, guests of heaven,
Thou wert most fortunate and forgiven!**

**She shall never eat nor write another line,
And never will her soft eyes look into mine,
And deathly lips no more can speak to me,
Conveying the music or magic of eternity!
The vast and shadowy mortal graves,
Are more sepulchral than ancient caves!
And when full of looks and words divine,
Shall those be fated homes of mine?!**

**Lo! every beholder of foreign miseries,
Of fighters at the head of mighty armies,
Or in the midst of conquering kings,
Where subjects believed in false things;
Or the fragrance of the earth and sky,
In native lands where we live and die,
Where dust of deserts covereth his bones,
And names are obscured beneath stones!**



Oh, skies who takes no pity on the dead! I can find no more strength to walk under you when she who was my life has left from your sight!

"Oh, my sister, do not leave me! How could you leave me, do you not have a drop of mercy for my broken soul.

Oh, heavens, I would die a million times before her but how could I live a moment in this cruel heartless world without her without whom I have no one?

My Lord take pity on my soul!

The heart hurts and the heart make men insane. I now pity the lunatic and the insane for I now feel their pain! It is paining me, my Lord, pain and agony which makes men mad!" She wailed aloud, "Oh, lonely world, I have no strength left so spare me, do not torment me any longer! Can't you see how weak my heart is? O take pity on my unloved soul!" Unable to stem her tears, she continued, "Oh, life why was I born only to be tormented by life! Oh, life why did you bring me to this hateful world! Why was I born only to be torn apart into pieces until my soul cannot breathe in pain!"

When the religious man performed the funeral sermon, the younger sister could not contain her grief:

Say ye the tie that binds a sister's affection,

Grows weak by time and interruption?

Look at yonder glades and gallows,

And find a woman in deeper sorrows,

Than the sister who lost a guardian sibling,

Who to the verge of expiration grieves,

And in sisterly bond still believes!

Dearest one who departed from me,

Thy transcendent knowledge is victory,

And sacrifices thou hast made today,

Shall last and linger in the martyr's way,

And peace shall flow, forever, pure and still,

From the top of Tehran's heights and hill!

And town and towers with fluttering flags,

Shall etch thy name on saddlebags!

Thy earthly pilgrimage with upward aim,

No mortal can seize nor can they claim,

Beauteous and benevolent, and free,

**God keep thee in His kind eternity,
For all thy faith-prompted Charity,
Shall save thee from pain and penury!
Alas, her hour hath come to die,
And her spirit hears death's cry,
Summons which admits no delay,
And refuse to come another day!**

"My Lord!" she cried out and screamed and screamed in an agony that echoed along the valleys of Tehran and echoed back to the heavens. "Oh, world! Oh, earth, how I can I ever walk upon you when you have taken the holy body of my own blood sister underneath your dust and Earthly soil?"

Again, she saw her older sister's resting place, and for her, all was changed, sadly changed. The angel of death has taken away her breath, and all that remains is the pale, lifeless corpse of the one so much admired and beloved. The younger sister was speechless in grief, and remarked that what a bitter change was made to her life in a few short days and hours that all her blessed happiness was brought to an end with the untimely demise of her only sister.

"Oh, darling sister my heart shall weep out to the havens until the cold-hearted angels shall take pity on a soul so tormented! I cannot survive life without your strength!" Flinging herself to the ground, the younger sister sobbed bitterly.

How brief this life was, she thought, that like a vapour, which is seen a little while and then vanishes away, youthful humans grow and die to decay. Alas, could it be true that the wind that passes over comes never again?

The air was cold, and the chilly wind rustled the leaves of the trees as she joined the line of supplicants who had gathered to perform the funeral prayers for her sister. Since the early hours of the day, crowds had been thronging the hills when they'd arrived. Now, the colours of the morning were pale, muted, as though the skies were mourning her death as well and had left a veil of sorrow draped over the Persian mountainside. The younger sister tried to stand in silence, but soon, sobbed so bitterly that in

her grief, she collapsed like the columns of ancient ruins. "This world is cruel Oh, my sister!" Cried the young woman. "This world is for men who have no hearts or souls!

I cannot live, I cannot survive any longer, the pain is too tremendous O Lord of my soul!

I complain to Thee alone of a pain that rips apart the soul into a million pieces of burning ember!

My soul shall weep on until my Lord takes pity on me!

Oh, heavens -she who was my all is gone, and how can you expect me to live or eat!

Lord, Thy plan is the best of plans yet my heart is too weak and I am tired my Lord I am tired.

The war, the bloodshed the hatred of people against you and your faith has made my heart weak and lonely! My Lord! Take some pity on a soul who has not one soul amongst all your creation to console her!

My heart is Yours, my Lord, and my soul you have already taken with her without whom I have naught aught but waters to shed through my worn-out eyes!

Oh, tears of my aching heart! how could so much water be held inside my small heart!

OH, heavens! Oh, skies up above the wild endless heavens! Do you find no pity in your heart for a soul who weeps and suffers so bitterly under your night sky! My heart is withering away into the madness of pain.

Oh, my Lord, take pity on me; help me, my Lord! Help me for I cannot enter my home because she who lived in it with me is gone!

She is gone my Lord, she is gone from me forever! never to return!

Oh, my Allah! I complain to Thee of her for she has left me! I complain to Thee alone for I have no one else but Thee!

She has left me my Lord; she had no right to leave me but she left me!

My heart cannot take the burden of a pain so heavy and so deadly, so I ask Thee alone for some lasting reprieve. I can never sleep in that room where her memory shall torture me into a madness strangled by pain which no human soul has the strength to bear.

How can I ever muster the strength to look onto the bed where you lay just yesternight Oh, my angelic sister?!

Why do you torment me so cruelly and mercilessly?!

Have you no feelings for her who is dying in an agony too deep for any human to feel?

Oh, Lord of my soul! How can I eat when she who was my only friend is now gone from this world and eats nothing but the dust and darkness?! How can I eat my darling sister when I never ate a meal without you which you didn't prepare!

Who shall feed me now that your gone?! Hadn't you thought of it before you left me?

My Lord! This world wasn't designed for me, this world was made for cruel heartless men who hate and kill each other out of jealousy and rage.

Take me to you my Lord, take me to you! Oh, forgive me, my Lord and take some pity on my soul and take me to wherever You are for I cannot live in the devil's world alone any longer!

Oh, world, how can I walk under your sky when you have taken away the only one who cares for me amongst all your people?!"



With great difficulty, the younger sister was able to compose herself momentarily and halt her tears so she could be present in the funeral services, but upon seeing her sister's body being buried, she burst into wild tears and cried out piteously. "Alas O my people, I cannot bury her; she who was my all. How could you ask me to throw dust over her?!" She pleaded. "How could you ask me to throw mud on her who was my soul?!

Then bury me with her O people, bury me with her because I cannot live if she is gone from me. This war has tortured me too deeply and I have become too broken hearted and too terrified to live life alone!

Oh, how could you bury a soul as noble as hers?!

You cannot take her away from me! She is all I have on this lonely world; the world has taken everyone else away from me!

O my Lord! I have no one! I have no one! Shall you not have some mercy on my injured and abandoned heart?!

Oh, darling don't leave me! Don't leave your sister behind! You have no right to leave her behind! I shall avenge all those who have taken you away from me!"

Upon crying out her exclamatory words, the young woman collapsed sobbing.

The elderly religious man saw her sorrow and implored in vain for her to forgive the people who were responsible for taking her sister's life.

"Forgiveness, my child, is what Allah decreed for us, and one day, if our children that are born today, decided to invade and plunder and kill people of a neighbouring nation, then we would have hoped they could forgive us for our crimes. Leave aside all thoughts of revenge, for death is not the end. Your sister is not here in this narrow expanse of earth, rather she is basking in heaven with her God."

"I can't," she sobbed, and the words brought up a fresh wave of pain and lamentation. "I can't forget. I won't forgive. There's no hope for me left, there's nothing but fear and pain that could burn all the stars of the universe."

Death is the doomed destroyer of human joys! Alas, what a blighting is this death, to erase the fairest hopes, and demolish all notions of envied happiness!

"Ah, dear child, must you still be here?" the elderly religious man asked, after he noticed the younger sister weeping over the grave of her older sister.

"I cannot bear the thought of not avenging her death, O holy man!" She lamented.

“Avenge!?” Cried the old man. “Alas! That cannot be! Forgive my child no matter how severe the pain is, for the God who created all men -let Him take revenge on His creation!

Give justice over to the most Just One! Let God do His job! You be a worshipper and a lover of mankind and of their Maker!”

Sobbing softly, the young woman turned to prayer to seek solace, and addressed her God thus: “My Lord, I cannot go on living; the pain is too severe and too deep and it has overwhelmed all my will and my senses, I have no strength no hope no purpose to live and no will to breathe.

My heart has gone away from my body and it has been buried with her who was the very soul of my heart.

Forgive me my Lord! Owner of my burning soul!

Leave not me behind, oh my only Hope!

Forgive my heart- whatever sin I may have done, my Lord! Take some pity on me or else indeed in this pain- I shall be destroyed! There's no hope but Your hope, no love but Your love.

Forgive me, my Lord, no matter how deadly my sins are!

Forgive me and save my nation and all other girls like me!

Our Lord, only You are my last hope!

If Thou should hate us and abandon us now, then indeed we shall have no one!

My Lord thou art great and man is not! So forgive us! Forgive us, my Lord, forgive the heart that beats with Thy name! Forgive the heart that gets tormented by sin and pain!”

The wind increased speed and she allowed her pale face to bathe in the lukewarm afternoon sun that wafted over the plains. What a great nation she lives in for which her only sister gave up her life. She wanted to serve this homeland with her dying breath and believed that this country and its religious people gave women like her refuge from degradation and humility. Now that her older sister was gone, she was left behind to suffer from hunger, sadness and destitution and to perpetually grieve for the sister who was dearer to her than her own life.

“Our Lord,” she continued, “do not let our souls drown in the sea of pain suffering and sin! Give us some strength, my Lord! Give our breaking hearts some strength to go on! Forgive us, our Lord for the heart has no friend- no guardian no companion except Thee!

Let Thy love protects our hearts and souls with faith and chastity!

There's no love except Thy love and no hope but Thy hope!

My Lord! War has taken her-she who was the only one who loved me and took care of me, and now I come to Thee with empty hands and an empty heart for I have no one amongst all the vastness of this world!

This broken heart has been stabbed- betrayed -shattered and cut in a million pieces has no strength and no hope to hold onto!

My Lord I call onto Thee with the last drops of my strength and the last hopes of my soul!"

The younger sister became so agitated upon seeing the pall bearers preparing to lower the body of her older sister into the grave, that she began to cry out, "Oh, people do not bury her body under the cold rotting earth! Don't you know she is part of me?!

Do not bury a part of my heart and my soul while I'm still alive!

How can you trash her and bury her precious body like some kind of rubbish?!

How could you live alone, oh my angel! How could you spend the first night alone in your grave while I sleep under the sky?!

No, O my Lord! Tell me she is with You! Tell me you took her body up to You in Your warm lighted heaven!

Do not break my heart, my Lord! Thou knowest my heart! Do not torture me, O owner of my soul!

Keep my sister in Thy kingdom and let not her body rot or decay or suffer under the darkness of the cold lonely grave!

Oh, my people! She is my angel my sister- my own heart my own soul! You cannot bury her while I am alive!

Then Kill me O my people, for I cannot survive a pain so deadly and so violent without my heart ripping apart and my souls bursting away in agony!

I cannot watch her go away from me forever after I had been tortured by this war which made me and my sister bury our own mother and the remains of our father!

Oh, my people do my tormented soul a last favour and spare my soul the pain of suffering by taking my life away!"

Such pain she was feeling that she the elderly religious cleric advised her to move some distance away from her sister's burial services, so as to lessen her grief. The young woman wandered sorrowfully across the plains before collapsing to the ground.

She awoke after several hours, or at least that was what she had thought, for due to her intense bereavement, there was no sense of date or time in her life anymore. Her only sister was dead, and she had no more guardians to look up to, and no more comrades to comfort her. She had ventured to the outside world beyond her small abode which she shared with her sister, hoping that wandering through the mountains would help her forget the piercing pain that pitilessly tormented her, and she hoped to momentarily forget what sadness afflicted her young life. This brief stroll under the clear Persian sky gave her some solace. She gazed heavenwards and wondered if above that secured vault of the sky, God would permit some degree of goodness to descend upon this barren land and return her sister to her again.

From afar, she spoke to her sister, hoping she would hear her from the land of the dead. "Oh, my darling! I couldn't bury you under this earth and walk over that same earthen floor and surface!

Oh, my angelic sister! My avenger and my guardian! How can I survive this torturous life when a part of me is gone and buried and now lives in the cold grave?!

Oh, my Lord! Oh, Allah Lord of my burning and aching heart! Take some pity on my helpless soul and save me, my Lord! Save me for who can save me if Thou too should turn me away from Thee!"

Hours later, when the elderly religious cleric arrived in his mosque, he was surprised to see the younger sister still weeping bitterly over the grave of her older sister.

Inquiring gently why she was so sad, the young woman told him that she felt terrible that the people who were responsible for her sister's death did not face justice. Expressing a keen desire to take revenge, the woman

begged him to help her find the killers who took the life away from her sister.

“Revenge can never make your grief go away!” The elderly religious cleric sighed heavily, and said, “Do not hate your enemies because you might become like your enemies one day. Should you find yourself hating too passionately your enemies for killing you, remember one day when you sin too much and the passion of hate and rage takes over your soul, then the demons and the enemies will get power over your government and your country, and they will force you to kill your neighbours and the people who will die in your hands will curse you and hate you the way you curse and hate you enemies today.”

It was a cold night, with sheets of icy rain pouring over her head. She welcomed the piercing droplets, allowing the rain to wash away her tears. Her face was now frozen, and she couldn’t feel her feet in her sandals. Although this was the main route to the city proper, the roads were deserted, and she did not know which direction to go.

Hunger deluged her and she grimaced at the pain in her head, and thought of her only sister who was now alone languishing in a narrow grave!

Why did I love my sister so powerlessly?

**O misery and mortality now confounds me,
And as millions more die in battles and wars,
And dead ones outnumber the distant stars,
O curse on this tyrant custom that dooms,
Such helpless youths to oblivion’s tombs,
Erasing these nations glorious story,
Condemning young women to infamy!
But no fear of death, nor earthly woe,
Nor echoes of a priestly word,**

**Could hasten or hinder death's arrow;
Or delay the meeting with thy Lord-
Who has thee now in His ward,
Beneath heaven's benign view,
Where only peace passes through!**

**For love of God and His sake,
Whether thou be asleep or awake,
Of if death lingered near or afar,
And perished thee in this war,
Wouldst heaven return to me,
The object of my sympathy?
Oh, how sure and serene the hours could be,
When her presence restores peace and tranquillity,
Or could give comfort to my chaotic mind,
And all I had lost, I could once more find?!
Living aloft, without fright or flaw,
Braver than the disciples of mortal law,
In all thy words and silent prayer,
Love was thy hope and thy heir!
All faiths were questioned with tales of the Old,
They desecrated the Testaments, both New and Old.
And while all those actions and contemplations,
Representeth the errors of human interpretation;
Thou didst in faith and fortitude, did persevere-
And for every emergency, tried to volunteer!**

**"My Lord," she implored, "do not abandon me to a world so cruel and so
careless! I have no strength to fight nor any strength to witness the
suffering of innocent souls!**

My Lord, take some pity on my breaking heart and on the torment and pain of my ailing nation!

Who can save me but You!

Who can give me some hope some sign of her but You, my Lord!

Keep her in Thy kingdom and let her not rot away into nothingness! Oh, Allah tell us Your eternity is true and promised for us who have suffered for Thy cause and have held onto to Thy faith against the rage of a thousand powerful and godless hateful men!

Oh Lord of my tormented soul! How can I survive this world?! How can I survive the hate of men and enemies without her who Thou had sent down to defend me?!

Oh my Lord, look into the agonising wailing of my bleeding heart! Listen to the sobbing of my heart's throbbing! And take some pity on my broken soul!

My Lord, I am lost I am lost! I am helpless in this vast cruel world! I have no strength no cunning -no will or wish to continue living!"

As she sobbed, fresh cold breeze was blowing inland and the younger sister smelled the sea before she saw it. A heavy rain was falling when she finally reached the town, and the wind was created ominous shifting patterns in the curtains of rain. She suddenly realised that there were many others in her nation who were facing similar horrors, and once more, she spoke with her God.

"There is no food in our nation! No food, no family, for all is dead in this accursed war! Our Lord, the enemies have no pity on the weak and the women! Shall Thou abandon me to the cruel enemies of my nation? Shall Thou allow them to torment my already tormented heart?!

Forgive my soul, oh Lord of my tortured heart!

Let my soul be my witness of the love I bear for Thee, oh my Allah, Lord of the weak and dishonoured women!

I ask Thee in the name of Thy love and the love Thou hast for me to spare all the tortured broken-hearted girls of my nation from a pain so severe and a suffering so bitter that it could extinguish all the tears of heaven with the tears of its heart!

Heed my cry oh Lord of the kingdom of all the heavens heed my call! For who shall lend me an ear if not Thou?!"

Even as the younger woman wept, the days stretched on forever, as the Imam waited in his mosque, leading the dawn prayers with fervent emotions, but unable to contain his patience, he began to tour the local hospitals and medical centres to find out if anyone in this country died from illness or war-related injuries, or even in automobile accidents which were quite common in this region, where inexperienced drivers found it perilous to navigate between hazardous streets.

The Imam requested a member of his congregation to take him to the local hospital so he could see for himself if any new body arrived in their morgue, and the man graciously agreed. The Imam clambered into the car, and they drove in silence. He tried to focus on the task ahead, ignoring the growing anticipation in his heart, because focusing on his destination was infinitely easier than what was going on in his mind.

When the wind and sea whistled and roared at their loudest, he became agitated once more, and wondered if more aerial raids were on the way, in which Persian civilians would become the casualty. As hours passed by, he muttered to himself and tossed his hands fretfully in anxious gestures, hoping that a miracle had taken place, and that all of warfare had ceased, but his heart warning him that something more sinister may be at play, for how could it be that for one entire year, five hundred corpses arrived in his mosque on average each day, whereas for the past 24 hours, and ever since he said the funeral service for the young woman who died trying to save several men from a blistering death in burning buildings and planes, not one body came, not even of those who died a natural death due to age or infirmity. His eyes fixed themselves intently on his pulpit, as he considered the words he would speak in the next service.

Perhaps, the very gloominess of death's whim seemed to accord with so melancholy a personage, that in the realm of death, the two sisters were sufficiently privileged enough to impress upon the angels of death of their unity in sisterhood.

The elderly religious cleric could offer no actual explanation for what had taken place, but he was fain to abjure his doubts as speedily as possible and reinforce conviction into the faith of the true believers.

Death was an underline reality. He was well aware of that. But what was going on in his nation for the past two days? How real death was, how horrifying it was to know that no death was an accident. It was the angel of death, then, who decided when and how a person should die! This truth hurt him so viciously, that for the next few hours, he could not bear to keep his composure, and avoided walking in front of the local graveyards or cemeteries and wept uncontrollably at the sight of any morgue or hospital mortuary, fearing that he would find more proofs that death was a thing with agency! He could make himself forget about the sorrowful mourning of the younger sister, who was perpetually weeping over the grave of her

departed older sibling, while death itself was ordered to halt. No one had died this day. Not one soul departed this world the day before! How was that possible? Whose power and privilege determined this? He was a religious leader whose job was to remind the congregation of the reality of death and decay and mortality by seeking solace in prayers, but now, in his fright, he did not know what to say or who to ask! The old man knew his weak heart could not take much more fear, and he hurriedly visited the home of the local cemetery's custodian and asked him if anyone had died in the past two days, or if family members privately buried him? The custodian shook his head, reminding the imam that all deceased are brought directly to the mosque for funeral services, and fortunately, for the past two days, he had been having a pleasant life, as he did not have to visit the graveyard once, since there had been no death.

"Not even one?" The horrified imam repeated, fearing he would lose his complete sanity.

The custodian easily shook his head.

His voice shaking, the elderly religious cleric wanted to know how often did it happen that for two consecutive days, not even one body arrived for burial.

"O Imam!" the man said excitedly. "I have never seen such a phenomenon take place ever in my life. Not a day passed since I arrived here as the custodian that a body was not brought here for burial. Indeed, this is the first time!"

The Imam was so shocked, that he wanted to scream and cry out at the world for doing something to his life which he could not fathom nor understand.

His heart had gone insane before his mind could find an answer to the mystery solving this dying question.

Before fear and madness drowned him, the religious leader decided to go and visit one more hospital mortuary and asked the chief medical officers if any of their critically injured patients died this day.

The answer was a resounding negative.

He froze in fear, and wondered what he could do to make himself forget about this bizarre phenomenon.

He no longer could sleep and decided to personally drive in front of hospitals and stayed awake all night, trying to find out if anyone who were awaiting death in hospices expired from this realm.

Hundreds of terminally ill patients were housed in these locations, and on average, fifteen to twenty men and women died natural deaths due to old age, but today, no one passed away.

The religious cleric knew that life was a blessing and death was a tragedy, but it was not death he was looking for, but rather an explanation for the phenomena of what was transpiring.

How could he receive seven hundred bodies each day on average, for the past ten years, and now, suddenly, for the past two days, ever since burying the beautiful brave young female martyr, all death was to be halted in Iran. Could such a thing be possible?



There had been another funeral at his mosque, and many mourners arrived to pay their respects, and as they were leaving the graveyard, grim-faced men marched hurriedly away, while the women continued to silently weep. The Imam was used to remaining with such doleful company, but now, his attention was diverted to a mourner who seemed determined to stay at the burial site.

It was the younger sister of the martyred woman, and though she seemed unconsolable, there was a look of grim determination on the little sister's face when she said, "I will seek to avenge the blood of my sister. Will you help me?"

"My dear child," the religious cleric began gently, "I am truly sorry for your loss, but let it be known that revenge only wrecks the soul, and cannot bring back the dead! Find it in your heart to forgive those who wronged you, as that is the spirit of our Lord and His Messenger."

"Ah, elderly pious man," the young woman sobbed. "How can I survive this pain? My sister was a woman who devoted her life to duty, putting service to her people and country above all else. Now she is gone, and I have no one!"

When I think she is no more,
And lost from life's grandeur,
And to know she is gone from my view-
Ah no! it never could be, never be true.
I wish no longer to be life's futile pawn,
But fly to the place where she is gone,
Our sisterhood will there be renewed,
And all our sorrows will be subdued,
And though the journey be long and meek,
With her, I shall be once more able to speak,
And lay all my troubles before her ears,
And she shall wipe away all my past tears!

"My Lord," the younger girl wailed, "forgive me or else my tears shall overflow the ocean and reach the shores of Thy heavens doors!

The wailing of my heart shall outweigh the screaming of the dying stars and black holes and all of heaven shall be a witness to the pain that ripped my heart apart into a million pieces!

Men shall come and war shall happen, oh my Lord and the world shall burn and start killing innocent boys and men and torturing their daughters and wives into madness and insanity and poverty and wish for a death that never comes and never fulfil the wish of those who want it!

My Lord, hold back Thy sun! Let it not cease its shine so soon for Thy slave maid who is buried under the grave might become afraid of the first night in the grave! Thy own beloved is now dead and gone and she who called upon Thee shall call thee no more!

Oh, moon that waxes and wanes! Become not full again for the world to see and make mankind forget time, for my time has lost all its worth!

Men shall come, men shall kill and die and attack and destroy nations and civilisations! Time has never taught mankind peace nor mercy!

My Lord, how shall I survive? How shall I live and how shall all the girls of my nation survive when they have all lost their loved ones and feels a pain like mine?!

Oh, sun! Why betray my heart by shining and lighting the world when my world has become dark forever?!

My Lord do not abandon me to my enemies and the enemies of my nation! I do not have the strength to survive or bear that pain and the agony!"

In his career, the elderly religious cleric had led thousands of funeral services, but never had he witnessed a mourner mourning the loss of a loved one so bitterly and painfully.

"Child," he began softly, "what memories can you share with us of your departed sister?"

"I believe the greatest quality in her was her instinctual reaction to hard times and difficult hours, and knowing how to give solace to those around her. It was at times when I felt thoroughly helpless, and were all on my knees from anxiety, grief and exhaustion, she was able to see some hope in life again, and lifted my spirits with her perfect phrases, and so often stiffened my resolve, and gave me hope for the future."

"Well, I shall admit that your sister was quite simply the finest, most dedicated servant Persia ever had. Our Iran had five of its fine young men restored to us due to her selfless sacrifice as she rushed into a burning

building and rescued them from the aftermaths of an enemy bombing. But tell me, dear child, why had your sister chosen to leave all behind and become so adamant to join active combat?"

The younger sister stifled a sob, and replied, "When the men of my family perished one by one, and death notices were beginning to arrive each week, and along with it, the draft notice warning male residents to show up at regional recruiting offices, made her anxious and after wielding so much pressure at such a young age, she did not want one more youth to die, and led the final rescue mission with a majesty and bravery way beyond her years. But I could never imagine she would die!"

He crunched his leathery old face into a grim smile and lowered his voice. "Ah, dear child," he said. "Nobody knows when death should come to them."

She knelt down before the small mound of earth, and upon seeing her weeping, all signs of seemed to drain from the religious cleric's face, leaving it looking serious and grim. He stood a short distance away, and heard the young woman praying unto heaven.

"Our Lord, forgive us! Forgive this heart that cannot bear a burning so searing that no thought can survive!

Oh Lord, of the faraway heaven come closer to me and hear my cries!

My Lord the men of the world care not for the weak and the broken ones! Only Thou, oh king of me and my darling's heart! Only Thou heedest my call!

Why have Thou taken her away when Thou knew well I couldn't survive life without her even for a sparing moment?!

Oh, my Lord this heart you made me with, it hurts me! O Lord, it hurts me most mercilessly; it tortures me, it seems like there is no greater curse given upon man more torturous more painful and agonising and brutal than the pain of love and the hurt of loneliness!

Why have Thou created me so weak?! Why hast Thou made me so severely weak and so worthless that I cannot survive any pain or brave any suffering!"

Alas! Will they cover her head with a stone,

Or abandon that fragile frame to be alone?!

When her disembodied spirit flies above-

Will she then be with the God of love?

When that vibrant soul it refuses to stay,

And leaves behind this senseless clay,

**Where amidst the immortal pains,
Earth shall perish with her remains.
And those who inhale that perilous air,
Moisten the soil with their distant tear,
But may hymn God's holy oracles,
Welcoming from heaven His miracles!
So, in some lofty mountain tops,
The sun rise from afar and stops,
Amid the darkness of their night,
In the beacon of a moonless might,
Where lighted by some kindly hand,
A fire glows with hope in this land!
To take the traveller to a friendly hearth.
Leading directly to his place of birth.**

But now she was gone! She left to the afterlife alone, away from the familiar lands and seas, and her younger sister felt vulnerable and lonely in the unfriendly earth, and felt as though she was standing on the threshold of a vast eternity where deliverance would soon come to her.

The religious old man felt doubly worried by her pain and sorrow, and he realised that the younger sister saw no more meaning in living, and was somewhat determined to quit this life.

She did not notice his presence and continued to address her Maker. "Hold me back, oh my Lord, from the world of madness and insanity which invites my heart to it to forget all pain when life becomes too hopeless to even think of!

Hold me back from the world as destruction and madness and sin lest I should lose both my heart and my soul in the pain of survival!

Oh Lord, take pity on the helpless souls that lay across the streets who has none to feed them or care for them or protect them!

I call unto Thee, my Lord! I call none but Thee so heed my call! Let it not fall into deafening ears!

Oh Lord of my breaking heart and burning eyes! My heart is bleeding with a pain that threatens to drown me into a misery endless and pitiless as the

beasts that devours all the living and dead! Take pity on a soul the world has forgotten about! Take pity on my nation whom the world has become deaf and blind to!"

The younger sister was still suffering from disbelief, for she could not fathom how her brave and bold sister could perish without any warning. Indeed, her soul was filled with a thousand troubled sensations, and only one consistent thought drifted into her head. She knew her sister should not be left alone in the darkness of the grave, and she wanted to hold vigils over her resting spot, hoping her dear sister would hear her familiar voice and be comforted with the knowledge that all was not gone.

"Oh Lord of all the worlds! Do not abandon me to the enemies of my nation! Merciless are the men of hate and vengeance oh Lord more merciless than any wild untamed beasts of the jungles! So I seek refuge with Thee, O God from all beasts and men! Protect me and my nation- my Lord, for Thou Thyself has taken away my only protector and guardian! Thou had given her to me and Thou has taken it away and now I am alone in a world of madness and the most ruthless pain!

Forgive the wailing of a forgotten heart!

My Lord, I have no one on the face of this entire universe so I call unto Thee until all hope fades away until only the hope of meeting with Thee remains! Forgive the weeping of a broken soul who has lost all love and all life and has none but Thee to call upon!

Oh Lord of mercy! Oh, God of me and my sister's soul! Reunite us in Thy heaven and give us Thine love which shall wipe away all grief and all torment that the world has inflicted upon our souls.

Forgive me for mourning her who was Thine to give and Thine to take, but O the human heart has no control over the pain that torments it and the agony the burns it into the edge of madness and hopeless despair.

Oh God of Hope and God of love! If it weren't for Thee, then I should have gone mad and been forgotten by my own self! It is only Thou alone whose hope has kept me sane!"

Uttering her prayers, the young woman approached her sister's resting place and cleared the small area of all dry or dead leaves, and arranged flowers atop the heap of dust.

She knew her loss was terrible, but also lamented the war itself which had been raging on for nearly a decade, and in which millions of her countrymen were being murdered and children starved and women mutilated. How pitiful this life was! She wanted to champion for her nation, and restore Iran to her former glory and goodness, where all women would be permitted to observe the purity of veil, and all men would be allowed to publicly pray in mosques, and religious men and women would never again be persecuted, as they had brutally been under the reign of the past deposed irreligious king.

Amidst Persia's ancient forests, we bear witness,
To legends who defends cities from ruined fortress,
Faithful stewards standing guard sleepless atop altars,
Against tyrants, invaders and coward manipulators.
Battling terror and hate, and deceit and death,
The sons of this land offered their final breath-
They braved the bitter winds and chills of the Arctic,
And drove our enemies to the shores of the Pacific:
honour the comrades who perished in foreign lands,
Remember the courage of those brave hands!

Fearless heritage now adorns this great nation's door,
A land mass stretching from a shore to a shore.
The heroism of liberty, charity and tolerance,
Rings in the rushing wind over Tehran's plain,
And echoes between Hazaran's Canyon,
These lyrics travel in the snow swirls of Isfahan,
Detouring over the hills of Shiraz,
Testifying to the plain truth of affinity:
That All is free in Islam's destiny!

Has any mortal seen the Persian mother's tears?
Or measured the pain in her farewell cries?
She offered her sons from their early years-
To defend the pride of this native land.
Warriors standing upon Diyala's sparkling shore,
Battling evil on the steppes, forests and meadows-
Were seized from the father by the lawless attackers,
And one by one, were hung from the pitiless gallows!
The soldiers defending our dust-covered towns,
Were guilty of no crime save protecting their own.

No mortal can conquer our ancient rage,
Our sacrifices shall remain on history's page,
And we shall redeem with our tears,
Memories of sad battles of that bygone age.
Our descendants are burdened with love and pain,
Nor are they to blame for the sins of another race,
The Mongols had tried to seize our gold and grain,
But were flung to the void from the noble birthplace.
Doubly cursed be the foes who forfeited the name of God,
Cursed be the homes upon the lands which he had trod!
Death and gore for he who defaced our pious laws,
Who mocked our tears and degraded our heavenly cause!
From the mountains of Prussia to the meadows of Paris,
Hordes of beastly men tried to conquest our homes,
They entered the Persian sky and trampled our Persian earth,
But were defeated and dead, and lost in dusty tombs.

We lived, we survived, creating god-fearing laws,

**Fashioned a great nation atop mountains of peace,
With a brotherhood including all diverse creeds,
This Persia ensured that all tyranny would cease.**

**This was the dream and hope for today,
To march into the gardens of my Allah's Paradise,
With sweet countrymen who'd chosen to stay-
And raise banners of victory with patriotic cries.
Over blood-stained battlefields of Persia's Ferdows,
Forcing pagans and fire-worshippers to sustain woes,
Driving away evil criminals and their unjust tyranny,
By offering branches of peace to the enemy.**

**Forgiveness has been what Persia is and was,
Forgives, but never forgets the enemy's trespass.
The cold-hearted foe begins a callous mission
Mistaking our camaraderie for compassion-
They burn our homes, they tear our fields,
They poison our wells, they break our shields,
They disgrace our mothers, they torment our sons,
They slander our faith, insulting with varied tongues,
They kill our children, and ruin our clan,
From Mashhad to Bishapur and Hamedan.
They never knew the Righteous Persian rage,
Of the tortured souls of our loved ones,
Nor can they comprehend the noble cause,
For which our mothers offered their sons.**

**A faithful land of freedom, faith and democracy,
Persia alone stood against all deceit and treachery,**

**Defending the purest laws of a Allah's righteous Word,
Our courts have upheld the morality in this world.
God keep us forever in the path of the Virtuous-
Long may this nation in harmony be prosperous,
May the leaders who guide us not be sinful nor vain,
Allah keep them forever in the rightful reign!
May he who lives here be sinless and dignified-
God's bounty be upon our towns and countryside!**

**Never again shall invaders corrupt these moral ways,
Which Persian soldiers defended to their final days:
The sinful foes slandering our religious creed-
Preaching immorality as part of their deed,
And strip women of our land in immoral ways,
To dash the dignity from Persian women's face:
Dead shall be their lives, and dead their laws,
Dead be the helpers who assisted their cause.
Oh, may the cries of the orphans, the curse of our widows-
And the curse of our innocents - dismember our foes!
May he that deceives us be tortured in every breath-
Alone and impoverished may he face the final death!
Cursed be the godless foe who insults our brave!
Cursed is their soul that will rot in the grave!
Bitter be his days who forced us into debauchery,
May the flames of destruction burn them to infamy!**

**And it's for our anger and pride that we live,
Honouring the homeland- never which we'll give-
To enemy who plunder noble Persian lives,
They wish to destroy morality from this blood.**

**The invaders plundered our native land,
Destroying everything beneath their hands,
They lay their blame on the motherland,
Accusing its sons of murderous commands:
Falsifying evidence against the innocent men,
They slandered the soldiers in retrospect-
And vanquished mothers with the strike of a pen-
Defiling all things sacred in this continent!
Armed with gratitude, faith and loyalty,
Innocent Iranians rose against this tyranny,
Liberating earth and freeing its poor,
Restoring to glory this everlasting country!**

**O, religion of Allah! thy glory will not be tarnished
By whatsoever aid thou may'st admonished,
In that tremendous day wherein the mercy,
Shall manifest from the Allah Almighty!
Verily this world, and that which is to come,
Shall render the deceivers both deaf and dumb!
And all the wondrous works of God's beneficence,
Shall be decreed from heaven for our deliverance!
And every decree traced by the eternal pen,
Shall save and solicit the lives of men!
Upon the tablets of the future fear and fate,
God shall be the succour against their hate!**

**Through vast centuries faltering and fleeting,
Iran's majestic regions had remained-
Noble memories of ancient wars conquering,
Steadfast like the legends of our warriors' reign.**

**Who scattered the invaders that were homesick-
From the gates of Tehran to tombs without bricks-
Remember the sacrifice of the deathless sons!
And honour the blood of our martyred friends!
They marched to the drum-beats of glory,
Yielding to the duty of valour and victory-
To fight for Allah's faith, to vanquish the foe,
They raised their sabres over seas of snow-
Banners of victory had flown since their birth,
Rejoice for the martyrs who died for Persian earth!**

"What pain what suffering what hopelessness could sever us, oh Lord!" The beautiful young woman cried sadly, thinking about the future of her nation. "Let them hurt us let them make us suffer or take away our loved ones, but they cannot take You away from us! Oh Lord, what is this life and this world when we will finally meet with You and live with You in eternity!? What is this life of a few counted days and what is these few days of suffering when we shall all be reunited with You in that life without any end?

What is the definition of a few days compared to the honour of an eternal life?! Hope has gone away, my Lord, and only loneliness remains and a depression too gruesome for any human heart to contain!"

Hearing the young woman's patriotic speech and song, the elderly religious cleric became slightly alarmed, and he exhorted her to reign in her emotions and try to control her excessive grief.

The younger sister dismissed his concerns, insisting that she wanted death and destruction upon those who caused her sister to die, but the Imam reminded her that forgiveness was the most noble gift one could possess.

"Respected cleric, I cannot forgive!" She cried.

"Oh, my child!" the old man explained. "Hatred is nothing but pride, feel hurt for your enemies, but do not hate them for when you hate them. You should not feel proud for your own goodness, but be thankful to God that we are the victims, because one day like our enemies, we might become the attacker, the assaulter and the invader ourselves. Before that day comes shed tears for your enemies and shed blood for your nation, until the truth of mercy and wisdom prevails, and all hatred and bestial inhumanity and cruelty comes to an end.

Give mercy a chance and peace a chance. Those who are the ones with the least passion and the most humility children. Those who forgive them more endlessly and countlessly is saved in the end."

When he finished his words, the young woman felt a certain stringency leaving her heart, as her hatred lessened and she supplicated to her God. "Save us, oh Lord, from the torments of this world and the hatred of this life and the brutality of a pain which makes men mad."

Several of her acquaintances wandered about the house or collected in groups in the hall, shaking their heads and shrugging their shoulders at the severity of the young woman's grief, who was beyond consolable. They begged her to eat even a little, but while they waited, the young woman sat longer than ever at table, without touching a morsel, while the remaining grieving party ate and drank with cheerful charades to keep her spirits high, but soon, they all accepted that the situation of the mournful sister was the most pitiable. To have lost a sister at such young an age was unthinkable for the girl, and her sorrow compounded due to the fact that her older sister was known to her as the very spectre of graciousness and nobility. There was no hope for her in this life. She wept wild tears and filled the house with lamentations.

The Imam Speaks:

He was unable to have a good night's rest, and rose in the morning disturbed and agitated, but when he thought that there had been no death for the entire day in this country, he uttered a most devout gratitude to Allah, thanking the Heavenly Creator that He hath been pleased so far to check the threatening wounds and illnesses of their dear countrymen as to leave room at least for hope while they still breathed.

The Imam fell into a stupor of despair. He arose early the next morning, and administered the communion of the dawn prayers to his congregation, stating that at the beginning of noon prayer, he would deliver a funeral sermon over the deceased who would be doubtlessly bough in by grieving family members.

It was his daily task to preach to men they owed to their country.

During each of the five times prayers, the religious cleric prepared for his funeral speech, as never had there been a single instance where at least a handful of deceased were not brought in to each of the appointed obligatory five times prayer.

However, as he stood with head bowed in precipitation, at the appointed hour of the noonday prayer, a sudden commotion broke out, and he glanced up to see numerous pall bearers arriving with the body of a thin person, whose identity was obscured by the white shroud concealing the head and face.

The corpse was placed before the Imam, who sought to verify the decade's identity, and recoiled in surprise. His eyes popped from his head, as he noticed the serene and comely face of the younger sister who had been present the day before for the burial of her older sister.

The Imam froze in his place, and could not move nor speak.

Meanwhile, the edifice was crowded with anxious listeners. The funeral discourse which was founded upon the text from Final Testament, was suddenly lost to his agitated mind, and he found himself speaking of the mysterious phenomenon that had taken place in the past 48 hours. The Imam cast worried glances around the mosque, and finding it overfull with his congregation, he anxiously inquired to them if anyone had heard of anyone passing away in the past two days, for he did not receive any bodies to bury in the past 48 hours.

Death was often blamed on a Benevolent deity, and many feared that supernatural beings with which the good people of Persian have been so grievously harassed since time immemorial, were somehow responsible for delivering the blows of death, but the existence of these two sisters in adjoining graves assured us that the God Who gives life is a God of Love, and it is the angel of death who had demonstrated his blood lust in our land, and chose to express some degree of curated compassion upon witnessing the tears of the sister, who could not bear to be separated from her dear older sister.

No sooner than this thought crossed his mind, the elderly cleric sobbed so pitifully, that the people in his congregation looked astonished. They did not know why the old man was so afraid.

They did not know that the religious old man had spent the past two days searching in every hospital and hospice for any wounded men or women or possible casualty, and did not find one person who had died in the last 48 hours. All appointment of death was halted in this land.

It was sheer terror that surrounded his thoughts as a fear that almost stopped his heart as he opened his mouth to deliver his service, but no sound came out. The religious leader wanted to cry but only ended up choking on his tears and still no sound would emanate from his mouth. Indeed, he feared he had lost his voice completely and was no longer able to control his frightened mind. The religious man did not sleep well for the past two days. It was not only the cold, or the fear of attack from the enemy that made him so anxious, but his mind kept shifting around the images of those empty morgues, and overfull hospital beds.

Then the young woman's body was brought forth, and the old man cast one astonished look into the pale youthful face. The congregation was silent, but then they heard a muffled cry and froze. The sound was not one of mourning, but of pain.

The people waited eagerly for the funeral services to begin, but he did not know what to say. His heart knew at once what had happened, and he knew that the angel of death had carefully arranged for this to take place, and made sure no one else died in the entire nation of Iran aside from the younger sister of the martyred woman so that the two sisters could be laid to rest side by side, to be united in death forever.

He recognised the young beautiful woman who was placed in the pall, and knew that it was her death which the angel of death was waiting for. No doubt the young woman was a pious female saint whose intense love for her older sister overwhelmed the cold heart of even the angel of death, who wanted to dispense one last act of mercy, and as a way of redemption, wanted to give her soul some solace. After all, the angel of death had but the power to kill, without the power to give life. He could not restore the life back to the older sister, but could take the soul from the younger one, so she would give up her mourning.

The spiritual freedom and chaste inwardness of the two young women may have been one of the reasons why the angel of death became so moved by their emotions.

The reality finally closed in on the religious man, when the two sisters were buried beside each other, as unlike private cemeteries of some foreign nations, people were buried as they arrived, as no one needed to purchase plots or property to be buried.

His mosque was in the vicinity of the cemetery, and for the past four decades, he never had day pass by without receiving multitudes of corpses from across the city, and yet, the impossible happened.

Every sentence in his sermon burned with patriotic ardour and all his intonations exhibited the Imam's deep earnestness in what he was saying. He cried openly, and begged God to make the angel of death's blood lust go away as he explained to his congregation the deathless miracle of the past two days.

"For these girls, life was cruel but death was gentle, and the elements of the miserable departure was eased from their existence, when the angels who were deputed with delivering death, chose to make a bold decision and decided that the two sisters, who were inseparable in life, should be united in death, and no other human was to come in between." Pausing a moment at the close of his discourse, the religious cleric repeated the words of funeral service, and then, in tones of thunder, he exclaimed, "No more shall we be able to ignore the glaring truth before us. The time to fight is over. The time to die is gone. For the first time in our nation's history, the angel of death refused to take the life of anyone in all of Persia, so that only the younger sister of the deceased heroine can die and be buried beside her dear departed sister." The elderly cleric called upon the congregation to celebrate the lives of the two women who sacrificed their all for a faith that would defend womenkind, and he asked them to share, as far as it was possible, the burden which has been laid upon them, and cheer their drooping souls by every assurance of Moslem sympathy. He called brethren believer to hold fast to the ties of our common faith drawing them near to the sisters and to one another, and awaken all their hearts, kind affections and prayers for the young girl who mourned her

older sister so bitterly that she died from sorrow. The religious cleric added that he desired to commend her virtues, and expressed the desire, that many among his congregation may cultivate and exhibit the like amiable and pleasing qualities of her, whose young life, so full of promise, has been suddenly cut short.

Suiting the action to the words, he threw the cloak from his shoulder and raised his hand to heaven, beseeching to the God of Abraham and the God of Adam to and the Creator of life to give them respite from the terror or war and death.

“While the vast majority of our youths had given up to the deceiving of their own wicked heart, and suffered to be led captive at the will of the enemy or the devil, and finally to the commission of crimes which brought punishment and infamy upon our national identity, and instilled misery and disgrace on all our people, but the two young sisters removed themselves from the joys of life and chose to sacrifice their own lives to save others. I have never seen anything like it! Indeed, my heart had recoiled with horror, as I think I have spent the past four or five decades in this area, and never have I seen anything remotely similar, and never was death halted over Iran for a fortnight. I experienced only the most peaceful, and certainly the most innocent, moments of my life as an Imam here, and never saw anything that gave me so much fright. But being here, removed from temptation, I was able to witness firsthand the intense grief of the younger sister, who could not tolerate the loss of an older sister. I have been enabled to review with bitter anguish the follies of my misspent life, where I had little clue of the world beyond death, but now, upon seeing these sisters lying side by side, I know! I know now what the truth of life is! The angels of death had become addicted to taking the lives of Persians, and only for these two days, did he spare all the people of Iran from death! Oh, if only he continued to be this merciful. Let us pray to Allah to remove the blood lust from the angel of death, so he ceases to take our lives and the lives of our loved ones, and our youths. I trust the Almighty Allah has been graciously pleased to pardon and forgive the two sisters, whose value was appreciated by the angels of death as well. We may be justified in attributing our nation’s salvation and our religious liberties to the constant and earnest prayers on our behalf, of this pious, afflicted, and most affectionate sister, who had wept herself to death due to the grief of losing her older sister.”

The elderly religious man spoke with genuine warmth, “It goes to my very heart, both as religious cleric and friend, thus to follow, day after day, the beloved ones of my charge to the grave, and each time that I officiate their funeral services, I remind myself that they were called back to heaven for their work and labour here was done. It seems to me that the two sister’s death speaks to all of us who remain, in deep and solemn tones, reminding us of the sacrifice the offered for their nation, country, religion and family.

The loss of the two beautiful and compassionate young women seemed also to say in tenderest tones, for us to uphold the faith for which they fought for, so with God's eternal and unchanging laws of heaven, we can all be kind to one to another, be tender hearted, and forgiving our enemies."

"Such intense piety and purity I have never seen before," he informed his congregations, "but what was striking about the younger sister was her overwhelming love for her older sibling, and her emotion that could flood the deserts with tears. They had the very great privilege to be born of undoubtedly pious parents, whose anxious endeavour was to train them up in the paths of piety and virtue. But, notwithstanding all their prayers, and all their cares, the sisters lived the greatest part of their lives alone, as this decade long war we are facing have claimed nearly every member of their family. Rather than opting to enact rebellion against their Maker, the young sisters praised God and prayed for the success of our nation and the freedom of religion. And scarcely a day passed without a poor family receiving some special gift from the sisters, who took it upon themselves to help all those who were in need. They were appreciative of the mercy at the hand of their indulgent Maker, and have added gratitude to gratitude, by sacrificing their all with a high hand. The Merciful Lord had heaped His blessings on their grateful head and made them into women whom we are proud to call one of our own heroes."

The religious cleric's prayer included a condemnation of the nation's enemies, and he called upon God to cast the spirit of the foe bound into the abyss, so that he may no longer seduce and dishonour the woman of Persia.

It was indeed a boon and beauty of one whose smiles and affection can win others from their sorrow and soothe the beating of a troubled heart. With her stern but confident words, she could restore a sense of confidence and joy in her peers. But the grief and woe of the younger sister was so severe, that thinking of their childhood made her weep with bitter tears. The cleric asked his congregation to think of the two sister's loss and insisted that it was indeed no ordinary affliction. The sisters were all they had, for every last member of their family had died in battle, and their courage had filled them with a dignity, affection and purity which awakened the admiration of all, but their very emotions gave poignancy to the grief with which the people of this land lament them.

He wondered if he may speak of her thus without infringing on the proprieties of this solemn occasion. It was due to the sense which she entertained of her amiable and attractive qualities, the remembrance of which cannot fail to awaken pleasant and kindly thoughts in the hearts of the people Persia, for many years to come. There were those who adverted to some of the feminine virtues and graces which resided in that fair form, but the Imam chose to meditate a moment longer on the spiritual strength

and faith which surpassed all the rest. Though adorned as a pattern of neighbourly or filial attachment, and possessing many generous qualities, the young woman's chief excellency appeared to be the robe of unfeigned bravery and triumphant faith in God. She was not afraid to die and give her earthly life away to save strange men who may never know what saved them.

This young woman was not dead, rather she was in heaven and now walked before the Lord in the land of the living. This it is which should bring all of us who are mourning some consolation, and this should help remove the sorrow and heaviness from our spirits. This knowledge of God in heaven brings a healing balm for our wounded and grieving hearts, for blessed are the dead who die in the path of God.

There was a hushed silence in the crowd, as they shook their heads, first hesitantly and then more vigorously. "Once our foreign foes recruit people from our neighbouring nations to attack us, and overthrow the religious men who are in power, then the godless dictatorial regime that will control us will ban all religious and strip honour from the women of Iran, and they will entrust faithless and immoral police with greater powers of repression, and they will include expeditions and armies of bandits, rebels, or refractory pagan summoners." Standing mournfully beside the grave of those two sisters, the elderly religious cleric sobbed and prayed to God to save Iran from future war and annihilation. "O Maker of the heavens and earth! Protect the women of this nation from dishonour and death. Accept the sacrifice of these two young girls and for the sake of their pain, let the bloodshed cease in our land, and let glory of thy religion ring from every hill! O Allah, remove the blood lust from the angels of death, and give us peace. Do not let foreign invaders encroach our lands in the future. And those children who were born from our enemy, and who were children of pain, abuse, lust and sin, and came into the world via the violation of a woman's honour, let those children not grow up to become passionate like their sinful fathers and do not let them ruin our nation's glory and start riots or destroy the fabric of faith from our midst. Don't let those passionate children who are born today to destroy our land thirty years later. Save us from those future pains."

The congregation waited in silence and some wept as the elderly cleric spoke. "While we may rejoice the sacrifice of these women with trembling hearts, that they were admitted to the fellowship of the great God, and were made partakers of Allah's grace through the beauty of His holy Book, let us seek our support from above while our earthly crutches are failing us, and as the outward flesh in us decay, let us see to it, that our souls are renewed day by day. Around us, there is a war going on with a neighbouring nation which was never meant to be our foe, but where our youths are dying in millions, and while we speak, all is changing on earth, and joys are fading as the flowers in the blast of the cold north wind. None

are exempt from death and decay. This is the end of all flesh. It is the end of youth in spite of all his charms. All the youthful faces we see him today walking forth in their vigour and strength, and displaying their gracefulness and beauty, everyone will have to die one day, and move on to the better and lasting world. Cheeks that are today radiant with health, and eye that are beaming with intelligence, and as we behold them thus, and we build our hopes upon those young and fair ones, and scarcely think of the decay and death, which in secret, are ever near to prey upon the fairest and most cherished objects of our affection. Yes, all shall die, because we were sent to this earth to be mere travellers."

Moments after the younger sister was buried, hundreds of bodies began to arrive at the cemetery for burial, and then the old cleric finally understood why there was no death for the past two days. At once, the old man began to shiver, as though perspiring from a deadly fever.

NEVER before through all the war and deaths and carnage had he faced such a tremendous terror.

It took all his strength to control his emotions and not betray what avalanche of fear was overwhelming his senses. He did not want to frighten his congregation.

Oh, what fear had deranged his mind! It was as if he had lost all control of his heart.

His heart trembled and his mind almost zoned out of the reality of the pain that numbed his senses.

Was there ever an old man in all of Iran as terrified as him? He did not think so, for how could he not be afraid when his old heart was in no shape to yield such fear and he felt like crying out but indeed he had to be the stronger

From the description of scriptures and the stories of saints and prophets, he knew that none other than the angel of death could have manipulated the narrative, and prevented his legions from taking the souls of anyone who might have live in Iran. Perhaps, in his preoccupation with the mourning sister, the angel of death forgot to take anyone else's soul. Perhaps he had followed the funeral procession to the mosque! The angel of death!

Many of the mourners huddled around the cemetery and began to pay their respect and greeting to the sisters who lay united in death.

"The man is thoughtless, indeed, who is not humbled with reflections and remembrance of death," the religious man continued, "for it is only the discussion of death that softens the human soul. Death of loved ones are inevitable and are meant to move us, and to awaken our sympathy and call forth our tears or designed to excite our deepest interest in the one thing

needful, and to lead us to call incessantly for help, till we shall find a sure and never-failing refuge in Allah, Who reigns above the vast universe with love and compassion, and Whose days are without end and Whose mercies cannot be numbered. O, no one knows when death will come to us, or how soon the shadows which have crossed this fair young woman's path may darken our own, and stretch themselves over all our earthly prospects, and we, like her shall, descend into darkness of the tomb. Let then, our gathering around these beloved sisters' remains, tend to quicken all our powers towards the attainment of our salvation and restore our nation to freedom and peace, and our religion to glory. Seeing the sacrifice of the two sisters, we can now realise the greatness of the work that remains to be done, and the need there is to be up and doing, so let us think of the reward from Allah which was promised to the humble, the charitable, and the pious souls. Let us think of her who lay beneath this bed of roses, and who reaped because she fainted not, and let us take a lesson from the woman's sacrifice and look forward to that glorious harvest when we too shall be permitted to gather our sheaves rejoicing. And what a day will that be, a day of joy and gladness, when friends or sisters long severed shall meet again at the appearing of Allah on the Day of Resurrection, and the ties of love and friendship be purified and perfected in the presence of God, amidst the joy of the heavenly world."

Soon, they murmured furiously among themselves, muttering about this astonishing event because every member of this congregation has been attending funeral prayers at least three to five times each day, but they noticed the remarkable absence of a funeral service in the past two days.

Soon, masses of driving clouds cast a gloomy shadow over the graveyard, and the Imam no longer could contain his emotions, and wept the bitterest tears for two sisters who were now at peace, and whose burial arrangement, the angels of death, personally took care of by not letting anyone die before the younger sister was ready to expire.

However, the next morning, all miracle of the past two days vanished, as before the call was made to announce the dawn prayer, eight hundred bodies arrived in his mosque's hall to be buried in the national graveyard, and government clerks came laden with equipment to assist in the process.

Seeing hundreds of bodies lying before him, the religious cleric wept wildly, and begged God to end this cycle of death. For two days, the angel of death refused to kill anyone, but as soon as the younger sister was dead, the wave of death once more overwhelmed Iran, and the imam knew if such a trend were to go on, then there shall be no more Persian alive on earth to praise God and perform good actions.

He performed the funeral services tearfully, and told his people, "We had been suffering from terrible persecution and our men and women were

barred from wearing religious clothes, or praying in mosques, but now, briefly, we have been accustomed to enjoy freedom for which in times gone by the people of our country have fought many a battle to win their honourable liberty. We have all lost brothers, friends and kinsmen. Our own kinsmen have been made captive, and imams and priests had been locked in prisons where they were punished for practicing religion. Rather than worshipping God of the heavens and earth, our enemies prefer us to worship spiteful cauldrons of fire, and our country's youth have poured forth their blood in war. These sisters you can see before you, united in death, were bent upon destroying the irreligious forces that were obliterating our nation, and they sacrificed themselves believing the people of Iran can survive. These two young girls did not glory in their weapons or equipment. For them, the name of the Lord was the only hope of victory in battle. The death of the older sister caused such a flood of grief into the heart of the little sister, that the angel of death himself took pity, and since he could not bring the older one back to life, he decided to hold off all deaths in our country until the younger sister passed away peacefully, and was able to be buried directly beside her older sister, so that the siblings could be united in death. Such high stations these sisters held in the sight of God, and if we all repent of our sins, we will be victorious, under God's command and peace will be restored in our land."

Then he prayed vehemently along with his congregation, and added, "Therefore, O angels of death and destruction, we adjure thee by the living God, by the true God, by the holy God, by the God Who so loved the world that He gifted us His Word in the Holy Book and Final Testament, with the assurance that whosoever believeth in its verses shall not perish, but shall have life everlasting, cease thy execution of men in these wars, and halt thy giving them to drink of the cup of eternal death; desist from harming the believers with death, injuries, grief and pain, and fettering not our freedom! Get thee gone, O angel of death! For the sake of the sisters who sacrificed their lives for this nation, for their pain and courage, leave this land, and give place to the peace of God in Whom thou didst find power and privilege."

Upon concluding his prayers, the old man begged his people to actively seek peace, and do everything in their power to end this war.

He announced fiercely, "Our humanity cannot be defined by the number of people we kill or being part of killing whether through monetary funding and propaganda.

We are defined by the amount of people we save, whether through words prayers tears or aid.

The biggest fool is he who fools himself.

We can never save by killing.

We can never attain peace by war.

We can never win by bloodshed.

We can never spread love with hate.

We can never bring justice through injustice.

We can never learn through ignorance and nor can we ever gain wisdom or intelligence by denying the truth or believing in falsehood."

It was soon after this incident that the elderly cleric retired from all public employment, finding happiness in the bosom of his prayer chamber, and surrounded by a small group of aging comrades, he found much gratification in assisting the cemetery's gardener in the care of the trees and shrubs and flowers that grow over the new and ancient graves.

The cleric never witnessed another day in his life that was more ominous and hopeful simultaneously, and upon retirement, he confined himself mostly to the house which he built and remained on the grounds surrounding which had changed from what they were decades ago when he was still the national Imam of the government mosque.

The Imam announced tremulously. "The tidings of the younger sister's death came to me like a clap of thunder. Indeed, my feeble old heart failed me when I heard it, and I could only bow in grief and submission, saying, "Thy will, O Allah, be done." My fellow believing men and women! I assure you, that never have I seen something even close to this phenomenon taking place in my career as religious Imam. I have assumed the government position of religious cleric at the age of 25, and for the five decades since, I have dutifully administered funeral services and rites for the deceased of this city. Never have a day gone by in my career that at least a hundred bodies did not arrive for the funeral services and required burial. Since the beginning of this war with our neighbouring nation, five to seven hundred men arrive in biers to be buried each day, and I consider it my privilege to administer their final rites, but it was this day, on this hour, and up till this moment, that no soul was flown to heaven from our nation, and no one in the entire country of Persia had died, nor did any elderly hospice patient succumb to their old age death journey. I have spent the past two days scouring and searching through every hospital, and every morgue and every medical facility, and nowhere did I find anyone nearing death. Indeed, it will astonish you to find that not even an automobile accident was able to cause instantaneous death in this nation today.

Only a few days previous when I had performed the funeral services of a woman who heroically sacrifice her own life to save that of her fellow human beings, I met with the only surviving family member and was moved

by a serious disquietude, and was anxious in the reasonable prospect of her speedy restoration to health."

Those who gathered for the funeral services looked on with renewed despair as they noticed that the last of this young woman's family was gone.

The terrible toll of that year's incident gradually wore him down, and the religious cleric grew weaker, till, before the close of the year, he was unable to leave his house. He often told members of his former congregation that while goodness and mercy had followed him all the days of his life, he trusted it shall follow to their close, and hoped God to fulfil His promise of granting him everlasting peace. He often invoked the story of the two sisters who were fearless in life and valiant in death. The miracle which surrounded the death of the younger sister never ceased to astonish the elderly Imam, and to his final days on earth, he recalled and recorded every death in his vicinity, and never again was there a day in Persian history that no man, woman or child had died in the span of 48 hours. No mortal died until the soul of the grieving little sister had departed from the confines of this woe-filled world.

One month after the death of the two sisters, talks for cease fire began.

A member of the congregation rushed to the old man's chamber, and announced, "Respected Imam!" He said earnestly, "A miracle happened today! Our government and our enemy leaders have begun peace talks. They will agree on an UN-brokered cease fire this week!"

"A ceasefire?" the imam repeated slowly. His hands trembled in fear and apprehension. "Indeed, after one decade, it is most astonishing to hear!"

"Imam, why do you look so afraid?" the man asked. "Is this not the good news we all were waiting for?"

"Alas, a ceasefire does not frighten me, but I am so scared because now what will happen now to our neighbour for next 30 years. Indeed, the forces who were forcing them to fight us, will now take revenge on them for not killing us anymore, and they will pay dearly for agreeing to this ceasefire. Oh, I am so afraid to think that for the next three decades, people of our neighbouring nation will be framed for the worst possible crimes, and they will be punished with brutal sanctions and other punishment for not attacking us anymore. What a calamity that shall be!"

The Imam was more than just a religious man; he vied with spirituality and knew that it was a solemn thing to stand on the verge of the eternal world, but he was calm and composed in the contemplation of death, and hoped his hereafter would be as assured as the two young girls who died only days apart, and for whose camaraderie, the angels of death and their legions had decided to let the dear siblings rest side by side for eternity, and refused to take the life of another human in the entire nation to ensure no

one could be buried in the immediate vicinity of the young departed woman.

The Imam resolved that unless anguish seized him, calm and tranquil he hoped to remain. There are some parts of the faith that was too mysterious for him to understand, and even the verses of the Testament often revealed generals, and not particulars, but upon seeing God's miracles manifest in his life, and witnessing the power and privilege of the emissaries of death, who appeared to have taken the initiative of deciding whom and how they would seize the life out of men, and as such as the religious cleric could understand, he had, particularly for the later years of his life, tried to make the rule of his conduct conform to the wishes of his Maker, and tried to adhere to the advises of the Final Testament, but, when he compared himself with its purity and holiness, he felt his want of pardon.

Upon conducting the funeral rites of the second sister, the Imam suddenly felt as though his life was coming to a close, for how could such an unthinkable event take place in his very own lifetime, where until the day before, seven hundred deceased men and women were lined in his mosque for funeral services, but as soon as the older sister passed away, and the younger sister began to mourn incessantly and grieve, death in Persia came to a standstill. For the next two days, until the final breath expired from the younger girl's heart, and she was able to rejoin her sister in death in an adjoining grave, no one died, not even the octogenarians who were riddled with diseases, not the nonagenarian grandparents in hospitals who were strapped to life support. No mortal could die before the younger sister took her leave, so that no one other than her could be buried in the empty plot next to the brave woman who sacrificed her life to defend country and save her countrymen.

Such events made the religious cleric realise that there were some doctrines entirely beyond him and since He knew God worked in mysterious ways, he believed that God, in some way, has made an opening, through the verses of His holy Book, for the salvation and happiness of His creatures. Though he pondered confidently as to his future peace, the religious cleric pretended to no special illumination on the subject of another world or any future state, but he trusted in the promises of the Final Testament, that assured mankind of meeting a Benevolent God soon after death. Goodness and mercy will have followed him, he was certain, and to God he wished to dispense the praise, and God and His Scriptures were the grounds of his hope.

In his later years, the old cleric became more and more preoccupied with death, and when his time came, he calmly and peacefully passed away, surrounded by those who loved him best, in the parlour of his own mosque, and in his Will, he made a request to be buried in the graveyard where the two sisters were laid to rest side by side, and of which he was for many years a trustee, and where, for over half a century, he had preached and

listened to the Word of God. His sole consolation was that he would rest in the same graveyard of the prodigal sisters, and await eternity beneath the shadow of the cypress planted by the Imam himself. Alas, death was real and present. How many of our dwellings has he already entered since this war began? No house was spared and no family unscathed from the axe of death, but no clan suffered more acutely or sacrificed more selflessly than the two sisters who died one after the other, using their dying breath to save and salvage their nation and dignity.

To his dying day, the religious cleric told his comrades, "It was in June of 1988, that contained the only days in the history of Iran that not a single human soul died. It was the only day in my entire 37 years of service that not a single dead body came for funeral prayers for almost 2 days. It was the only day that not a single soul passed away, not from accident, nor from diseases, nor from homicides and not from suicides.

It was the only day in the history of Iran that not a single human had died!"